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S K E T C H
OF THE
R E I G N
OF
GEORGE THE THIRD.

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GEORGE III.

A

S K E T C H

OF THE

R E I G N

OF

GEORGE THE THIRD,

FROM

1780,

TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR

1790.

FOURTH EDITION.

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TO those who open the volume of history with a view to improve their understanding; who are competent to carry their researches beyond the external appearance of events, and to speculate on the concealed causes which produce the elevation, or accelerate the decline of empires, there is not, perhaps, in the annals of time a period more replete with political matter, than the one which has elapsed between the year 1780 and the present time. In that short interval,

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we have seen the British Empire, which had embraced both hemispheres, and to which India and America were only provinces ; which had successfully opposed, under the auspices of the late Earl of Chatham, the combined force of the House of Bourbon, and, after giving laws to Europe, had dispensed peace to mankind : we have seen this empire shaken to its basis, convulsed at home, and assailed on every side ; vainly invoking the aid of that Princess, whose fleets we had conducted into seas unknown to her barbarous subjects, and whose banner we had taught to fly on the shore of Greece and of Asia Minor. It was from her hand that England, already bending beneath the complicated calamities of domestic division and of foreign war, was destined to receive the final blow, which unnerved our arm, and compelled us, reluctantly, to assemble our distant legions for the protection of the capital, and the preservation of our existence. It is unnecessary to say, that I allude, to the “ Armed Neutrality ;”

a measure

a measure which originated from the cabinet of Catherine the Second, although it was followed by all the Baltic Powers ; and the retribution due to which, however long delayed, is now probably near its accomplishment.

But we have not only seen the British monarchy, in common with other states and kingdoms, oppressed by enemies, and sinking under the weight of adverse fortune, or pusillanimous and feeble counsels : we have seen this expiring and diminished empire (unlike to every other, and in this dissimilarity laying the strongest claim to the admiration of mankind), within the period of only ten years, rise from her state of humiliation, and resume her ancient lustre. It is in vain that the most laborious research would endeavour to parallel this extraordinary renovation, in the history of modern Europe. It is only in the Athenian, or Roman Annals ; it is only at the fatal periods of Marathon, and of Cannæ, that we see any example of a republic suddenly and rapidly emerging from the

lowest point of ruin and calamity, into a state of greater power and grandeur than that which she had previously enjoyed.

The House of Austria, which, under Charles the Fifth, and Ferdinand the Second, had so nearly extinguished the Germanic liberties: humbled by Gustavus Adolphus, and fettered by the conditions which were imposed on their ambition at the Treaty of Westphalia, remained long inactive; 'till Marlborough, by the victory of Blenheim, again enabled them to re-appear in the European system, though not to resume their former projects of conquest and subjection.

Spain, which under Philip the Second had fitted out her invincible Armada for the subjection of England, while she prepared to place an Infanta on the throne of France: Exhausted by her own perpetual efforts, and having drained the treasures of the new world, in vainly attempting to reduce the revolted provinces of Holland; sunk under Philip the Third, into insignificance; and now, after the lapse
of

of two hundred years, appears to be only slowly emerging from poverty and weakness.

Sweden, which over-ran Poland, Saxony, and Denmark, at the commencement of the present century; and which, conducted by the frantic valour of Charles the Twelfth, appeared ready to plant her triumphant standards on the walls of Moscow, was hurled in a single day from the zenith of power and glory. All her laurels withered at Pultowa; and since that memorable æra, her melancholy and sterile annals contain nothing which can awaken curiosity, or interest mankind, though more than seventy years have elapsed since Charles expiated his wild and destructive schemes of ambition under the walls of Frederickshall. At the moment when I am writing, a Prince, emulous of the fame of Gustavus Adolphus, and adorned with qualities which, in a more fortunate period, might have restored the drooping genius of Sweden,

den, is endeavouring to supply the deficiencies arising from the impoverished and depopulated state of his dominions, by personal fortitude and ability. He has even made a daring effort, to check the Russian progress, and to assert his ancient pre-eminence in the Baltic. These, however, are feeble attempts; and serve rather to remind us of what Sweden once was, than to awaken any well-grounded expectation that she can again resume her former situation in Europe.

Even France, a country so peculiarly favoured by nature; blessed with a happy diversity of climates; enriched with the choicest productions of a luxuriant soil; embracing the Atlantic and the Mediterranean seas; uniting in herself almost every natural advantage which industry can bestow, or commerce can procure; long inured to habits of obedience and loyalty, as well as trained to conquest and to war: France herself, after the severe chastisement

ment which Lewis the Fourteenth, towards the conclusion of his reign, received from Eugene and Marlborough, remained supine and torpid during twenty years which succeeded the Treaty of Utrecht; content to cultivate the arts of peace, and oppressed under the load of public debt, which the insatiable and ruinous ambition of her sovereign had incurred. It was not 'till Marechal Saxe assumed the command of her armies, and revived in his person the sublime talents which have equalled him with Condè and Turenne, that France, in any measure, seemed again to occupy her natural pre-eminence among the European kingdoms.

It cannot be more curious to enquire, than it must be instructive to ascertain, whence has arisen this characteristic principle of refuscitation, if I may be allowed the expression, which, in so short a space of time, has raised England from her depression; and has enabled her,

unlike

unlike the other surrounding monarchies, to profit of her very misfortunes, and to engraft splendor and power upon her losses and defeats.

Where are we to search for this extraordinary source of renovation? Is it in her spirit of commercial enterprize; in her undiminished industry; in her numerous and ingenious manufactures, which have penetrated into almost every province of the civilized world? Doubtless, these causes have contributed much to extricate and to restore the nation; but, efficacious and salutary as their tendency and operation are, they cannot be considered as altogether adequate to so great a work.

It was requisite that Providence should extend its tutelary care, to prolong the life and reign of a Prince, inexpressibly dear and necessary to his people; whose experience, matured by years and chastened by adversity, might, and could alone be equal to the arduous task of selecting from among his subjects, those who from capacity

pacity and virtue were competent to heal
 the wounds, and restore the energy of the
 commonwealth. It was requisite that a
 Minister should arise, who, to incorrupti-
 ble integrity, and unblemished manners,
 should unite strength of mind, severe
 œconomy, vigilance which never sleeps,
 eloquence to captivate, and vigour to sub-
 due. Rare, and almost unexampled com-
 bination of endowments, conferred by Hea-
 ven on those, and on those only, whom,
 in her wise dispensations, she destines to
 sustain, and restore a sinking monarchy !
 Yet, such a Minister, may it be asserted with-
 out flattery, has this age and country seen.
 Such an administration have we already
 enjoyed during near seven years; and to it,
 in a great measure, may be justly ascribed
 those auspicious and happy events, which
 the present age regards with mingled won-
 der and admiration, and which will be
 long commemorated by a grateful pos-
 terity.

To trace the gradual progression from
 the darkness of 1780, to the bright sun-
 shine

shine of the present moment : to pourtray some of the leading characters and events, which have successively marked and distinguished the intermediate time : to describe that stormy and tempestuous period, which, during two years, shook the cabinet, the palace, and the throne, till in 1784, the present Minister, after a long and painful struggle, advanced into open day, and commenced his brilliant career : to mark the principal and most discriminating features of his domestic government, and foreign policy : to take a general survey of the causes, which have involved the monarchy of France in anarchy ; and which seem to threaten that beautiful portion of Europe, with all the horrors of civil war, of bloodshed, and of bankruptcy : finally, to deduce this interesting series of events, from the period at which I have commenced, to the time when I shall lay before the public the picture which I am now designing : these are the objects of the present attempt.

I am sensible of all its difficulty and delicacy.

cacy. I know how dangerous it is, even to hold up truths to the eye of prejudice, or of party ; and how reluctantly we allow the veil to be withdrawn from before the political sanctuary, when we are interested in its concealment or its defence. I feel how invidious is the task of appreciating the motives and actions of our cotemporaries, our friends, and our fellow citizens. I am not insensible, above all, of my own incapacity to treat of matters yet recent, and obscured by the passions and interests of the great actors themselves. But, great as these impediments are, they cannot induce me to relinquish my design. What narrative can be so instructive, or so interesting *to* the present age, as the history *of* the present age? “ *Veteris populi* “ *Romani, prospera, vel adversa, claris* “ *scriptoribus memorata sunt:*” Of the last ten years, no sketch has yet been offered to the public. It will be my province, “ *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul* “ *habeo;*” with as much impartiality as the subject itself, and the infirmities of

our nature will admit, to delineate the events which have passed in succession before us, since the disastrous period where the present memoirs commence.

The British empire, which only a few years preceding that æra had appeared to be so elevated and durable, then exhibited a melancholy and instructive lesson of the mutability of human greatness. Civil war, which had commenced its destruction, was aided by a combination of the first European powers, to compleat its fall. Her fleets and armies, accustomed to conquest, retreated before the navies of France and Spain. Her shores, so long unused to hostile invasion, were threatened and insulted. Her finances groaning beneath a new and annual loans, conducted upon injudicious or ruinous principles, seemed to approach that point, beyond which public credit cannot exist or survive. Discord pervaded the capital, the senate, and the cabinet. London, scarcely escaped from conflagration and pillage, looked forward to a general suspension of commerce,

merce, and to national insolvency, as imminent and almost inevitable. Clamour and discontent filled the kingdom, and characterised the assemblies of the people in the different counties. Ireland, disdain-
 ing all further appeal except to the sword, and treading in the traces of America, armed her subjects, not so much for defence and protection, as for the purposes of emancipation from the yoke of England. In the British Channel, once sacred from foreign intrusion, the islands of Jersey were repeatedly attacked. Spain, which had already re-united Minorca to her crown, held Gibraltar besieged, and meditated the conquest of the Floridas. Every month brought accounts of the diminution of the West India Islands, which successively fell into the hands of France; while Jamaica, left almost to her own internal capacities of defence, expected with trembling solicitude the long meditated invasion, by the united fleets of the House of Bourbon.

In India, Hyder Ally, the scourge of
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the British nation, aided by the arms of France, was on the point of exterminating and expelling us from our most ancient possessions. Madras was menaced by famine, as well as by war ; while Bengal itself scarcely sustained the pressure of the Mahrattas ; and the vast fabric, which Clive had cemented with a profusion of European and Asiatic blood, was ready to crumble with as much rapidity, as it had been originally constructed.

In America, the names of Clinton and Cornwallis had succeeded to those of Howe. New armies had occupied the posts of their victorious, but departed predecessors. The war which had long blazed in the northern and midland provinces, was then principally transferred to those of Carolina and Virginia. Useless trophies and barren laurels, appeared to be the only advantages, which we were destined to derive or acquire. Impenetrable woods and impassable morasses, in the centre of which freedom had displayed her banner, perpetually baffled all the exertions of valour,

lour, military skill, and perseverance. England began to awake from her dream of subjugating the Thirteen Colonies, and already meditated the dereliction of that ruinous and expensive undertaking; while her pride, her honour, and her indignation still propelled her forward, and amused her with hopes of success, which constantly vanished at a nearer view. Like the Roman empire under Gallienus, that of Britain seemed to approach its final period, and to be menaced with impending and total subversion.

From this gloomy and dejecting picture of foreign affairs, it may be judicious to pass to a more animated, if not a more exhilarating scene; that which was exhibited at home, in the two houses of Parliament. The principal figure which here presented itself, was the First Minister, Lord North; struggling against a host of enemies, and slowly retreating before them, while they pressed forward with loud and repeated clamours. A thousand javelins hung upon
his

his political buckler, the points of which were continually broken and turned aside, by his urbanity, his ready and pleasant wit, or his able and ingenious reasoning, when sufficiently stung by the reproaches which were heaped on him, to awaken and to rouse his torpid parts. Inur'd to the habits of parliamentary debate, and master of all the science of ministerial evasion or defence: though destitute of energy and coercion of character, yet eloquent, mild, persuasive, and blessed with an almost insuperable tranquillity of temper, he patiently saw the storm exhaust itself; and looked round, serene and placid, to that powerful phalanx, which, long accustomed to obey, still closely adhered to him under every circumstance of public distress, and never abandoned him in the hour of necessity. Even the lethargic and soporific qualities of his body, as they frequently prevented him from either hearing or feeling the invectives of opposition, in some measure disarmed and blunted their edge; while slumbers, which
so

to often fly the couch of princes, not unusually visited Lord North, amidst all the din and tumult of the Treasury Bench.

Near him sat the American Secretary, Lord George Germain ; whose more irritable nerves, and more communicative or unguarded character, afforded materials and scope for continual attack. Gifted with extraordinary natural endowments, though little cultivated by polite letters, or adorned by science ; active, persevering, decisive, and capable of conducting the greatest affairs of state, he was yet pursued by the same fatality, which had blasted his early prospects of greatness. Unsuccessful in age upon the plains of America, as he had been unfortunate in youth upon those of Germany, he vainly invoked an exhausted nation, and a discontented Parliament, to continue a war, which, however just and necessary in its origin, had become odious and ungrateful, from a long series of ill success. Loyal to his Sovereign, pertinacious in his favourite measure of subjecting America, and con-

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ceiving his own political situation inseparably connected with the final success of that attempt, he adhered inflexibly to it, and regarded its prosecution as a sacred principle, from which no obstacles could induce him to recede.

Mr. Ellis, who for near half a century, since the times of Walpole and Pelham, had occupied a place under Government, continued to retain his ancient corner on the Treasury Bench; while Mr. Dundas, whose pliant and versatile talents have adapted themselves to almost every Administration, and whose abilities are calculated to strengthen and support any, was seated nearer to the centre of action, and boldly presented himself at the post of danger, whenever the enemy attempted to storm the outworks. His friend and companion Mr. Rigby, still enjoyed the ample revenue of the Pay Office, without a partner; and in the excesses of a voluptuous table, of wine and conviviality, drowned the recollection of tiresome debates, and more disgraceful defeats.

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The two great luminaries of legal knowledge, Thurlow and Wedderburne, who had long occupied and adorned their seats on the same side of the House, had been successively raised to the honours of the peerage; and their empty places were filled by others, far inferior in energy, dignity and capacity. Such was the aspect of Ministry, at the period to which I allude. On the other side of the house, Mr. Fox led on the bands of Opposition in close and well conducted files, while Mr. Burke charged at the head of his irregular squadrons, and carried terror into the ranks of Administration. Dunning, in defiance of nature, destitute almost of organs of articulation, monotonous and disgusting in his tones, ungraceful in his figure, possessing no external advantages, and unadorned by any factitious circumstances of birth and alliance; yet, under all these impediments, arrested the judgment, charmed the ear, and captivated the imagination, by the stream of his eloquence: though it sometimes flowed through the channels of

law, it was always bright, clear, and lucid. Keppel, Conway, Howe and Barrè, occupied their respective stations in this formidable and augmenting body, and aided the general attack upon the feeble and dismayed adherents of the Minister.

Sustained by the purity and integrity of his intentions ; reposing on the esteem and affections of his people ; and bent on the prosecution of a war, which, however unfortunate in its conduct, was founded in the just rights of his throne, no symptom of change or alarm was to be traced in the Sovereign. At no period of his reign, were his fortitude and magnanimity put to so severe a test, and at none were they more unshaken. Equanimity, serenity, and dignity, appeared in his features, and pervaded his manners, even in moments of the most acute personal suffering. That piety, and that resignation to the dispensations of Providence, which has always formed so distinguishing a part of his character, eminently gilded the gloom of this melancholy portion of his reign, preceded
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and followed by scenes of prosperity and glory. Such was the sublime and affecting spectacle, which George the Third exhibited to mankind, amidst the convulsions of every kind which menaced his domestic tranquillity, diminished his empire, and attacked him with augmenting violence.

To the limited eye of man, incapable of pervading futurity, and of removing the darkness which surrounds it. Louis the Sixteenth then presented a very different and a much more enviable figure. Fortunate in having succeeded to a prince, who was sunk in dissolute pleasures, and lost to all public exertion before his reign expired, he ascended the throne of Henry the Fourth, under every flattering circumstance of youth and of prosperity. His want of any eminent talents seemed to be amply compensated by œconomy, application, decorum of manners, and, above all, by a selection of wise and able ministers. A successful war, which eclipsed and obliterated the disgraces and defeats, sustained

tained by France in her last rupture with England, endeared him to a loyal and affectionate nation, characterised for ages by its predilection and attachment to its monarchs. A Queen, distinguished by endowments of mind, of manners, and of person, not less than by her high rank and imperial descent, had formed the bond of connexion between the Houses of Bourbon and of Austria, while she rendered Versailles the residence of pleasure, gaiety, and magnificence. France appeared to re-ascend in the scale of Europe, in the same proportion as Great Britain declined ; and flattery, if not reason, already predicted the revival of the proud age of Lewis the Fourteenth.

But, to confound the speculation of policy, and to evince the hasty transitions of human greatness, it was precisely at this very juncture that the seeds were sown, which we have since seen matured ; which have already overturned the very elements of order and government, stained the palace of Versailles with blood, and menace the
extinction

extinction of property, personal security, and every thing dear to mankind. The troops, who were sent as auxiliaries to the rebellious provinces of Great Britain beyond the Atlantic, speedily imbibed that spirit of freedom, which they were commanded to defend ; and did not relinquish these sentiments, so incompatible with absolute monarchy, when they returned to their native country. On the other hand, the anticipation of the public revenue, necessarily produced by a war, however glorious and successful, added to the immoderate expences of a dissipated and luxurious court, soon reduced the King to adopt a measure, which though disinterested and even patriotic, opened the way to shake his throne. Louis the Sixteenth was persuaded to break the royal household, to dismiss about four hundred officers holding posts immediately about his person, and to content himself with a less expensive and splendid establishment. Perhaps no advice more replete with calamity, could have been conceived or followed. The
pomp

pomp and external paraphernalia of majesty being once withdrawn ; and the numbers of nobility, attached to the sovereign by interest, vanity, or affection, being once disbanded, the throne was left naked, unprotected, and exposed to insult. Experience has evinced its destructive tendency ; and has shewn that only a limited monarch, who reigns in the affections of his subjects, and whose interests are intimately blended with those of his people, can remain an object of respect and homage, divested of the splendor and protection of a royal court, and numerous household.

The Empress Queen, Maria Theresa, closed at this period a reign of forty years, marked by the most striking vicissitudes of prosperous and of adverse fortune. During the existence of the powerful combination, which shook her throne in the commencement of her life, she exhibited the most undaunted magnanimity, the greatest resources of mind, and a courage superior to her sex. Driven from Vienna in 1741, while

while Bohemia and Austria were over-run by the French and Bavarians, she found protection and succours in the loyalty of her Hungarian subjects, who at sight of her beauty, youth, and misfortunes, forgot their hereditary enmity and jealousy of the Imperial house, from which she sprung. The afternoon and evening of her reign, though frequently disturbed by foreign wars, were passed by her in the discharge of every duty, due from a sovereign to her people. Mild, clement, humane, munificent, and ever extending the proofs of her parental tenderness to her wide extended dominions, she was idolized by the Hungarians, beloved by the Flemings, and dear to every order of citizens. That piety and fortitude which had characterized her life, accompanied and brightened her dying moments.

Her crowns descended to her son Joseph ; a Prince who had given premature expectations of genius and capacity, and whose emulation of the King of Prussia, promised to render him worthy of so great

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an antagonist. But Europe was soon undeceived in this favorable anticipation of the talents of Joseph the Second. Agitated with perpetual and varying schemes of conquest: restless, and incapable of repose: planning innovations in religion, in manners, and in civil life, which were no sooner executed, than revoked: oppressive and despotic, without the art either of concealing these qualities, or of rendering their effects palatable to his subjects: menacing at the same moment, the just franchises of the Netherlands, and the ancient liberties of Hungary: dreaded in the empire, and detested in his own capital: anxious to enlarge the limits of his dominions, even at the expence of faith and justice: rapacious of ecclesiastical property, and profuse only of the blood of his people; Joseph soon alienated the affections of every rank, and closed a tempestuous reign, unregretted, and unlamented: leaving the House of Austria in embarrassments, produced by his violence and ambition, scarcely inferior to those, which
had

had so nearly overturned and extinguished it, at the death of his grandfather, Charles the Sixth.

Two illustrious and extraordinary Princes, then filled the thrones of Muscovy and of Prussia. A woman was still destined to sway the sceptre of the Czars, and to govern the immense regions, extending from the Frozen to the Caspian Sea. Unequalled in magnificence, and unconquerable in war, Catherine the Second had enlarged the limits of her vast dominions, covered the Black Sea with Russian fleets, and threatened the entire subversion of the Ottoman power. Protectress of the sciences and liberal arts, she cultivated the friendship of d'Alembert, courted the correspondence and the praises of Voltaire, and, like Louis XIV., extended her munificence to men of letters, throughout every kingdom of Europe. Intoxicated with success, and elevated to the summit of human grandeur and felicity, she forgot the friendly hand which had aided her arms, and taught them the way to victory ; while dreaded

and admired in every quarter of the globe, she seemed to have chained the inconstancy of fortune, and to defy the changes and clouds, which so frequently darken the conclusion of a female reign.

Frederic, covered with laurels, and retired from Berlin to the solitary magnificence of Potzdam ; in the bosom of literary repose, and sinking under the pressure of augmenting infirmities, advanced towards the termination of his memorable life and reign. Alienated from, or indifferent to the misfortunes of England, he regarded with a philosophic and averted eye, her present unequal contest against so many powers ; and extended no relief, nor made any exertion, in favour of his ancient ally.

Portugal alone, among so many neutral, or hostile states, ventured at this distressful moment, to give some affirmative marks of friendship to the crown of Great Britain.

While Europe exhibited this aspect, so little calculated to awaken hope, fresh losses

losses and defeats awaited the arms of England, beyond the Atlantic. The capture of the Island of St. Eustatius, which, on its first promulgation, had diffused a general joy throughout the nation, produced in the event only obloquy to the captors, and a suspension the most untimely and injurious, in our naval and military exertions ; while the troops, which should have acted with vigour against the enemy, were sunk in inactivity, or occupied in plunder.

As the year advanced, new islands were lost, and new disgraces incurred; 'till the climax of national calamity attained its ultimate point, by the surrender of an army of seven thousand men, who laid down their arms before Washington and Rochambeau, on the shore of the Chesapeake. After six years of mutual slaughter and alternate success, the genius of America triumphed, and this last unexampled victory for ever confirmed her independence. The intelligence, when it was received in England, shook the already tottering Administration, and precipitated its fall. Dismay, and terror pervaded the cabinet,
and

and agitated the counsels. The Opposition, conscious of the augmenting distress, and fluctuating irresolution of the First Minister, called aloud for an explicit avowal of his renunciation of any further efforts, to subjugate the revolted colonies. The expressive silence of Lord North to these peremptory demands, left no room to doubt either of his sentiments, or his wishes; and the Secretary for America, retiring from a situation no longer tenable, after a rude attack from Lord Carmarthen, was received into the quiet bosom of the House of Lords.

The enemy rushed into the breach, which this disunion had occasioned, and already beheld the prize within their grasp. The Administration, however, still lingered, though destitute of animation or energy. A feeble and ineffectual effort was even made to prolong their existence, by the substitution of Mr. Ellis, in the place of Lord George Germain; but this step served only to accelerate their dissolution. The Opposition, eager to seize the prey, and acquiring force as they advanced, pushed on towards

towards the citadel ; 'till Lord North, on the 20th of March, 1782, exhibited the singular and humiliating spectacle, of a First Minister divesting himself of all the insignia of office, before a crowded House of Commons : and announcing his resignation to an astonished audience, who scarcely credited the fact, of which they were witnesses.

The novelty and effect of this extraordinary surrender of power, were increased by its being equally sudden and unexpected. Neither his friends nor his enemies, were aware of the blow ; and even his Sovereign did not suspect, 'till almost the very instant in which he executed his purpose, that any such was meditated or intended. It is nugatory and unnecessary here to enquire, whether it was principally produced by timidity, fatigue, or disgust. Probably, by a combination of all these emotions ; and unquestionably, by a very unforeseen and hasty determination.

In this disarmed and unprepared situation, without either time or ability for framing a new ministry, the King could
only

only surrender at discretion. He did so; and the royal garrison, entered by storm, was plundered by the conquerors. Three garters were found among the spoils, and which served to decorate the principal chieftains. Offices and posts were distributed at their arbitrary pleasure; and a new Administration soon appeared, composed of motley materials, and evincing in its very formation and component parts, the principles of speedy dissolution. The feeble genius of Lord Rockingham presided over it, but could inspire no heat or energy into the heterogeneous mass. Ill calculated for so arduous and delicate a station, he wanted talents to guide, and animate the complicated machine, of which he was only the ostensible leader. Mr. Fox and the Earl of Shelburne occupied the two Secretaryships of State; while Keppel, raised to the peerage for his services on the 27th of July, 1778, succeeded to the presidency of the vacant Board of Admiralty.

It is not my intention minutely to delineate

neate or depiçture, the meafures of this tranfitory Adminiftration, juft fhewn to the Britifh, as Marcellus was to the Roman people ; and fnatched away by an extinction as hafly, but not as much lamented. I have ever regarded the fhort period of its duration, as the laft and loweft point of national and royal depreffion. Though illuminated by a victory, which has fhed an unexampled luftre over the annals of England, no ray of it reflected upon the Miniftry : they had vilified and perfecuted the great naval commander who obtained it, previous to his departure for his ftation ; they recalled him in the very moment of his conquelts. The annals of that period, circumscribed within three months, are marked by the humiliating and fruitleft attempts of the Government, to obtain peace from Holland ; though illufory promifes and affurances of fuccefs, had been held out to Parliament, and to the country, by Mr. Fox, before his entry upon office. The peerage, in the almoft only inftance where it was conferred, was

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extorted

extorted from the Sovereign, without even the decencies of respect, or of request; and the extraordinary spectacle, of a newly-created Peer kissing the King's hand in the Queen's drawing room, in violation of all form or usage, was reserved for the Rockingham Administration to exhibit, in the person of Sir Fletcher Norton.

A bill, which without materially conducing to national œconomy, or public benefit, diminished on one hand the dignity which used to wait upon the person of the Sovereign; and on the other, disarmed every succeeding Minister, by leaving him scarcely any objects, with which to stimulate activity, or reward merit and adherence: A bill, which by compelling every Administration, from want of offices to multiply the peerage, as the only thing left in their power to bestow; and which, if not redressed and repealed, may eventually destroy the balance of the constitution: A bill, well known, and as
well

well characterized, by the name of its eloquent, but theoretical and visionary author, was introduced, and rapidly carried through the unresisting Houses of Parliament ; while the King was compelled to lend his name to the completion of a law, which disbanded his household, and disarmed his authority.

This unwise and impolitic attack upon the majesty of the Throne, was properly accompanied and succeeded, by similar invasions of the hereditary franchises of the people. Under the specious allegation of extinguishing the corrupt influence of the Crown, a great and industrious body of men, the officers of the customs, were deprived of their just and unalienable right, to vote in elections for their representatives in Parliament ; and the natural reward of merit or services, was converted by the Legislature into an instrument of punishment and privation.

But, happily for the Monarch, and for the nation, a Ministry, in which hypocritical profession was substituted for action ;

whose conquests were limited to St. James's, and whose trophies were only obtained over clerks of the Green Cloth and housekeepers, now drew near its extinction. The natural decease of the Marquis of Rockingham, which took place upon the 1st of July, 1782, can scarcely be said to have preceded, or anticipated his political dismissal. He expired in the vicinity of London; regretted only by his immediate friends and adherents; esteemed as a virtuous and a well intentioned, though an inadequate Minister. His elevation to the first post in the Administration, was injurious to his character as a man of talents; and he was twice destined in the present reign, to see the political fabrick which he had reared, moulder within a few months, and sink under its own pressure. Like Galba, "*Major privato visus, dum privatus fuit; et omnium consensu, capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*"

Released by this interposition of fortune, from a bondage equally severe and humiliating,

humiliating, the Sovereign made a selection of his servants, more consonant to his own personal inclinations, as well as more calculated to advance the public service. The Earl of Shelburne assumed the vacant Treasurer's staff, which had dropped from the hand of the deceased Marquis ; while the honest and virtuous incapacity of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, was supplied by equal [probity and integrity, but accompanied with those sublime and early talents, which Mr. Pitt alone has displayed and sustained in the present age. Having declined the proffered advances of the late Ministry, and having refused to form any inferior part of, or accept any secondary situation under that system, he now first appeared in the front ranks of Government ; and evinced to an astonished nation, that in a post so arduous as that of the superintendence of the complicated finances, of an exhausted and impoverished country, he could unite the energy and vigour of youth, with the maturity

maturity and experience of more advanced life.

Some subordinate alterations in other departments of state, completed the new Administration ; which, at its commencement, was favoured by the advanced period of the year and session, and the prorogation of Parliament which naturally followed. The adherents of Lord Rockingham filled the Lower House, with loud clamours and pointed insinuations, against the supposed motives and authors of a change, so inimical, as they asserted, to the best interests of the monarchy. Mr. Fox, in a manly and magnanimous, Mr. Burke, in a querulous and reluctant manner, respectively resigned their situations. The impassioned exclamations of the latter were only interrupted and extinguished, by the arrival of the Black Rod, and the summons to attend the Chancellor at the bar of the House of Lords. The session closed ; and oblivion already drew her veil across the departed Administration, while new convulsions, and new scenes of political confusion

confusion were silently, but rapidly, generating in the womb of time.

Peace, which for so many years had fled, now prepared to return. Inactivity, and a premature suspension of hostility beyond the Atlantic, gradually opened the passage to universal tranquillity in Europe. America, already declared independent by the Legislature, no longer occupied the arms or efforts of Great Britain. Holland, divided by the Orange and the Republican factions, feebly sustained her portion of the common attack. France, arrested in the midst of all her conquests by the arm of Rodney, saw her boasted navy scattered over the Western world ; happy to escape the pursuit of a victorious fleet, and to sink undisturbed, in the havens of Martinico, or of Boston. It only remained to humble the arrogance of Spain : who, insolent with unaccustomed success, and elated with the trophies acquired at Minorca, and in Florida, had assembled her forces of every kind round the rock of Gibraltar, and already anticipated the re-
union

union of that proud fortress to her dominions. To indulge at once the gratification of national vanity, as well as the acquisition of glory, a Prince of the Blood Royal of France was invited to quit the effeminate pleasures of Versailles, and to become a spectator of its reduction from the Spanish camp. Preparations only inferior to those of Philip the Second against Elizabeth, were made to accelerate and secure so favourite an object of the court of Madrid ; while all Europe might be said, in common with the Count d'Artois, to have fixed their eyes upon this animating spectacle. I need not relate the event ; inscribed in characters, which must last as long as military fame and valour are revered among men. The formidable armaments of Charles the Third perished under the superior fire of the garrison ; and the miserable victims who escaped from the conflagration, were indebted for their lives to the exertions of that very enemy, for whose destruction they had been assembled.

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Under this singular blaze of glory and success, was terminated a war, which had been marked during its progress, with every circumstance adverse to England, and which, at many periods, had menaced its very existence. Negotiations, prolonged throughout the autumn, produced a general pacification at the beginning of 1783; the terms of which, however widely different they were from those, which Great Britain dictated at the treaties of Utrecht and of Fontainbleau, seemed neither ignominious nor disadvantageous, in the enfeebled state of the finances and resources of the country. France restored almost all her acquisitions, while Spain retained her conquests; and Holland, which had tardily and reluctantly been forced from her pacific system, was abandoned by her allies, and left to expiate by concessions, the departure from her ancient policy and connexions.

But, the waves of party, which had been so long and so violently agitated, could not immediately subside with the

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extinction

extinction of hostilities. The two powerful factions, who had successively possessed, and been deprived of the government, however adverse they were to each other, yet united in their common opposition to the new intruders. The character of the First Lord of the Treasury, though distinguished by many imposing qualities of mind, by ingratiating and popular manners, and by an enlarged acquaintance with the foreign interests of England ; yet wanted that stamp of probity and principle, without which a great nation never confers esteem and confidence. Insincerity and duplicity were ascribed to him by his enemies. Accusations and suspicions were circulated, possibly originating only in calumny, which arraigned his purity of conduct as a Minister, and insinuated his acquisition of personal wealth, by the abuse of his high situation, during the progress of the late negotiations, to the sordid purposes of private gain. Doubts of this complexion, however unauthenticated or unjust they may be supposed, yet,

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by operating on the Public, equally indisposed them towards the peace, and towards its author.

To these obvious and ostensible causes of his dismissal, may be added, the extraordinary, and almost inexplicable indifference which marked his conduct, towards preserving a situation, which it had been the leading and predominant object of his life to acquire. Parliament met ; and after long and violent debates, renewed at various times, expressed its disapprobation of the peace recently concluded, though by a very small majority. It is even highly probable, that this mark of their dissatisfaction would not have been attended or followed, by any such affirmative proofs of national repentment, as to have compelled a Minister of firmness and rectitude, to retire from his public situation. Whether any consciousness of a deficiency in either of these qualities, or whether motives more concealed and unascertainable, actuated the Earl of Shelburne ; it is certain, that he did not hesitate to take the warning

which had been given him, and to lay down his office without delay.

But though he had embraced this pusillanimous and precipitate part, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, animated by feelings of integrity, loyalty, and duty to his Prince and to his country, generously refused to abandon them to the resentments and discretionary mandates of two factions, who had agreed to a mutual sacrifice of principle, and even of decency, in order to gratify their thirst of power. After a magnanimous, but ineffectual struggle, he was however compelled to yield to so unequal a force. The Sovereign, who had vainly endeavoured to compose a new Administration, and who had been besieged in his own palace during six weeks, found the lines of circumvallation too strong to force, and surrendered a second time prisoner of war. The two victorious chieftains, who had agreed to bury all past causes of resentment in oblivion, entered the breach in triumph, bound their captive, posted their centinels, and invested themselves
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in the spoils, which their conduct had acquired. The larger share, however, of these emoluments fell to Mr. Fox; and the Treasury was transferred from the mild incapacity of Lord Rockingham, whom death had removed, to the laborious, but limited and subservient talents of the Duke of Portland. Lord North, who did not feel with Cæsar, that “ the first situation
 “ in a village out-valued the second in an
 “ empire,” was content with the inferior portion of power and profit, allotted him by the liberality of his new associates, and mixed in the cavalcade, which he had so long conducted. Too happy to obtain an amnesty for the misfortunes of his Administration, and soothed with the unaccustomed panegyrics of those, who had so lately called out for axes and scaffolds; he sunk without emotion, into a subordinate office, and resigned the painful pre-eminence of state, into hands of greater energy or ambition.

A pause succeeded to this extraordinary and eventful transfer of power; as the
 monarch

monarch and the nation were equally incapable, of instantly exerting any effort for their emancipation. The “ Coalition ” imposed their fetters upon both ; and little attentive to acquire the affection, were satisfied with the submission of their prisoners. Relying on their own united strength, to retain the conquests which they had made, they only began already to project the means, of perpetuating and extending the term of their duration. To atchieve this object, it was indispensably necessary to reconstruct the edifice, which their injudicious spirit of reform had lately overthrown ; and to substitute other charges and offices in the place of those, which had been annihilated in the household of the Sovereign. These pleasing anticipations and reveries, formed a grateful occupation during the recesses of Parliament ; and the succeeding winter was destined to see the chains, which an unprincipled ambition had fabricated, imposed with all the solemnity of legislation upon an unresisting people.

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There is, however, a limit prescribed to violence, which it has ever been found impracticable to pass; and the "Coalition" was destined to be taught by its own experience, that no combination of talents, power, or ability, can sustain a Government, where all opinion of principle, or respect for character have ceased to exist, on the part of the nation towards its tyrants. Even the forms of the constitution, and the sanctity of law, will not prevent a generous and an enlightened country, from discerning the abuse of that authority, which while it extinguishes prerogative, militates equally against freedom. Time alone was requisite to mature these reflections; and the Administration opened the way to their own destruction, by the very means which they had concerted, for placing their greatness beyond the reach of accident.

Mr. Fox introduced his celebrated "East India Bill," with all that splendor of parts, and display of ability, which has rendered him so distinguished in the history

tory of the present age. Though India was not in that department of public business, over which as Secretary of State, he personally presided, yet the superior energy of his character, and the convenient facility of his new colleague, allowed him to assume this arduous and dangerous pre-eminence. Mr. Burke's ample and inexhaustible stock of materials and documents, supplied any deficiencies of memory or local information; while the "Institutes of *Timur*," and the wisest regulations of European policy, were new-modelled by this generous legislator. The oppressions and calamities, under which India had so long suffered; the peculations, committed by the servants of the Company, as well as the wanton and unprincipled wars in which they had engaged, were highly painted, and strongly reprobated. The remedy to these numerous evils was presented; and all palliatives were deprecated, as unequal to the extermination of a disease, which had pervaded the whole system, and which demanded a measure
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of more than ordinary vigour in the Legislature.

The House of Commons yielded to these convincing and ministerial arguments, so calculated to operate on their passions, as well as their judgments. The ineffectual opposition which was made to it by Mr. Pitt, and a few persons who adhered to him, neither retarded nor impeded the rapid progress of the bill. It was carried through one House of Parliament, by prodigious superiority of numbers; and it was not apprehended, that the subservient understandings of the other House, generally disposed to see all measures of all Administrations with a favourable eye, would reject the present, or canvass it with unusual severity. The “Coalition” appeared already to touch the shore, and to be near the accomplishment of their most sanguine projects of greatness.

The magnanimity and penetration of the Sovereign, awakened and directed by the timely exhortation of those, who collected round the throne in this critical and dangerous conjuncture, snatched the country

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from the impending misfortune. The great incorporated bodies in various parts of the kingdom, slowly roused to a comprehension of the evil, and alarmed at the violation of the chartered rights of the first commercial company in the nation, appeared ready to reclaim, and to defend their own threatened immunities, or properties. London led the way in these symptoms of consternation, and was followed by the principal cities and provinces. Addresses, remonstrances, and petitions, arrived from every part of Great Britain. Satire and ridicule, so powerful in their operation upon the minds of men, united with reason and argument, to overturn a Ministry, who had attempted to construct their own grandeur, equally on the ruin of the Prerogative, and the destruction of the Constitution. Two caricature drawings, conceived with exquisite humour, and whose effect cannot perhaps be compared with any thing in our history, except the song of “Lillabullero,” under James the Second, were circulated in every company. In one of these, the Secretary of State who had introduced the bill,

bill, was depicted carrying, like Atlas, the whole East-India House upon his shoulders; while the affrighted Directors, looking out of the windows, appeared vainly to invoke assistance against the violence. The other represented his triumphal entry into Dehli, the capital of his newly conquered dominions. Mr. Fox was habited in the splendid Asiatic dress of Shaw Allum; while his obedient colleague in office Lord North, degraded to the inferior nature of the trained and managed elephant, supported the victor on his back. Mr. Burke, as a trumpeter, accompanied the procession, proclaiming the virtues and trophies of this successor of Tamerlane and Aurungzebe.

The storm of national indignation, though long and tardy in forming, had now collected, and prepared to burst with the utmost violence. The House of Peers led the way, by throwing out the East-India Bill; and on the subsequent night, at a late hour, his Majesty sent to demand the seals of office, from the two Se-

cretaries of State. An Administration, at the head of which was Mr. Pitt, and of which he may be said to have formed the vital principle, was instantly composed. So secure, however, were the late Ministers of their ascendancy in the House of Commons, and in such contempt were these efforts of the Crown to liberate itself held by them, that when the writ was moved for Appleby, in consequence of the new First Lord of the Treasury having vacated his seat, it was received with loud, and almost general laughter. Even those, whose judgment and experience in Parliamentary matters were most respected, ventured to predict, that a few weeks would see the termination of this fugitive Government, either by a gradual, or a violent death. For the first time since the accession of the House of Brunswick; perhaps it may be said, since the existence of the monarchy, the sovereign and the people were united, in opposition to the representatives of the people. The patient and passive fortitude of Mr. Pitt sustained him,

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even more than his talents or integrity, during near three months that this siege continued ; nor did he advise his Sovereign to have recourse to the last constitutional measure left him, that of dissolution, till above a hundred and twenty addresses, couched in terms of loyalty, and of reprobation against the attempt to overturn the prerogative, left no room to hesitate on its popularity, or on the general joy with which it would be received.

The elections for the new Parliament, which at no period of the present century were ever so incorrupt, and so free from all ministerial interference, evinced beyond dispute, how odious to the nation were the principles and conduct of the late Administration. The First Minister emerged at length, from a state of the most painful exertion and depression, into political day ; and the reins of Government, so long and so violently retained by the “ Coalition,” fell from their hands. It is from this æra that we may date the slow, but progressive elevation of the British
 empire ;

empire ; which, shaken and convulsed during the calamitous period of the American war, had not been less agitated by internal struggles of faction, since its termination. But, before we arrive at that exhilarating scene, it may be not a less instructive, though it is a less pleasing task, to survey the picture of the empire, at the moment when the present Minister commenced his Administration.

Exhausted in her finances, and deprived of vigour from the rapid succession of so many Governments, debility, languor, and decay characterised every internal department of the State. The public funds seemed to have sunk below the point of depression, to which even the misfortunes of the war had reduced them ; and the confiscation which had menaced the East India Company while Mr. Fox's bill impended over their property, had operated to sink their stock below any former precedent. The revenue was diminished and invaded by the bold inroads of contraband commerce, which loudly called on the
Legislature

Legislature for effectual interposition and redress. No foreign alliance, or connexion with any of the great powers on the Continent, offered the prospect of support in a future war. Holland was completely governed by the Republican faction, who, under Van Berkel in the present, as under the De Witts in the last century, had entered into the closest connexions with the Court of Versailles : while the Prince of Orange, retaining little more than the name of Stadtholder, was reduced to a state of passive insignificance. Denmark, whose sovereigns had been connected by alliances of blood and policy, with the Crown of England, for near half a century ; and whose natural interests, in opposition to those of Sweden, tended to confirm these ties ; had departed from her ancient principles, and no longer cultivated the friendship of a kingdom, incapable of extending protection, or rendering itself respectable in the Baltic. From the Court of Stockholm, attached for ages to France, no demonstrations of
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amity could be expected. The Emperor, occupied in systems of reformation, or projects of aggrandizement ; planning the exchange of the Netherlands with the Elector Palatine, while he wantonly attacked the Republic of Holland ; whose troops, in defiance of the most sacred treaties, he had ejected by force from the barrier towns of Flanders : Joseph, engaged in these ambitious enterprizes, and already connected with the Court of Peterburgh, might be regarded as inimical rather than friendly to Great Britain. Russia continued in a state of sullen alienation, and Prussia betrayed no marks of returning friendship ; while France, still conducted by the splendid and imposing counsels of Vergennes, appeared to extend, to cement, and to confirm her greatness.

The first years of the present Administration, were principally characterised by those beneficial regulations of commerce, and by those salutary measures of finance, so indispensably requisite, in the fallen and impoverished condition of the country. An

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“ East-India Bill,” mild and temperate in its genius, and widely different from the rapacious and arbitrary principles, which had rendered the former so universally odious, was introduced, and passed into a law. The most vigorous and efficacious measures were adopted, for the suppression of smuggling. The royal woods and forests, from whence so great a support to the navy ought naturally to be derived, but, which had been completely abandoned, as an object of national protection, for half a century, did not escape the vigilant attention of a Minister, anxious to avail himself of every public resource. Provision was made for the flow, but certain diminution of the national debt, by the appropriation of a million sterling annually, vested in the hands of commissioners, for the purchase of stock.

The consolidation of the Customs and Excise, a measure of incredible labour and detail, as well as of infinite advantage to commerce, by facilitating and simplifying the intricacies, attendant on mercantile transactions, and the payment

of duties ; a regulation, which in itself might immortalize any Administration, was fully and permanently effected. It had failed, under the inert and feeble efforts of Lord North ; and its completion, so evidently productive of national benefit, drew applauses, even from the enemies and opposers of the Minister. This long list of enlightened and patriotic measures, was closed by the accomplishment of one of the greatest, but most delicate and arduous attempts, which have distinguished the present century ; I mean, the “ Commercial Treaty with France.” An enlarged and liberal policy ; the greatest incitements to general industry ; the extension of commerce, and the extinction of those mutual jealousies and antipathies, which have, for so many ages, actuated the rival monarchies of France and England : these were the characteristics and principles of a treaty, which, notwithstanding the specious objections urged against it in Parliament, excited universal approbation, and extorted involuntary eulogiums.

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The genius of Great Britain, long obscured and fettered, began to assert its antient energy ; and, liberated from domestic anarchy, prepared to re-appear on the theatre of Europe, from whence she had been banished, by internal calamities and distress. The signature of the “ Germanic League,” at Berlin, whose object was the preservation of the liberties of the Empire, against the ambition of Joseph the Second, was the first symptom exhibited of returning attention to the concerns of the Continent ; and though this confederation was only acceded to by his Britannic Majesty, in his capacity of Elector of Hanover, yet its effect unquestionably extended beyond its ostensible object, and again recalled the English nation to general view and consideration.

While under a wise, vigorous, and œconomical Government, we were thus resuming our antient eminence and dignity among the European States, the clouds of discontent and civil commotion, were rapidly collecting over the monarchy of

France. The finances, involved since the cessation of the late war, in augmenting embarrassments and inextricable difficulties, might have been found beyond the probity of a Sully, or the capacity of a Colbert, to re-establish: in the hands of Calonne, raised to the superintendence, they appeared to present a prospect of public insolvency, as imminent and unavoidable. Though the Court of Versailles was much diminished in majesty and splendor, by the numerous reforms which had successively taken place; yet, the Ministry had not substituted any judicious system of frugality, nor adopted any measures of energy and wisdom, either for the alleviation of the national burthens, and liquidation of the enormous debt, contracted under the late and present King: nor, (which seemed to be still more necessary for their personal safety) to guard against the gathering storm of public violence and indignation.

Louis the Sixteenth had already, in a considerable degree, survived the respect,

spect, though he continued to enjoy the affection of his people. The first years of his reign, conducted by Maurepas and Vergennes, had been distinguished by the most brilliant success; which, while it dazzled and flattered the national vanity, had, in a great measure, concealed from view the ruin, which it occasioned in the finances. The King possessed none of those qualities, either corporal or mental, calculated to fascinate, and to supply the place of more solid endowments. His figure was destitute of dignity, and his address awkward and embarrassed. He neither knew how to assume the open and winning manners of Henry the Fourth, nor how to adopt the majestic condescension of Louis the Fourteenth. Attached to the Queen, from motives rather sensual than intellectual, and restrained by religious scruples, from forming any connexions of gallantry with other women; he never, in any instance, violated his nuptial fidelity, though surrounded by courtiers, anxious to anticipate, and eager

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to administer to his desires, on the first intimation. Addicted to the pleasures of the table, and sometimes induced to pass the limits of temperance and sobriety, he yielded in those moments of facility, to the demands, which the profusion of the Queen, and of his brother the Count d'Artois, made it necessary for them continually to renew. His own expences were moderate, and his pleasures few. The former, were chiefly confined to the construction of the Castle of Compiègne, and the repairs of the palace of Versailles. The latter, consisted principally in the amusement of the chace. Though much neglected in his education, during the life of Louis the Fifteenth, his mind was not uninformed; and he had attained since his accession to the throne, a very considerable degree of acquaintance with polite letters, history, and geography, by his own private application and solitary study, unassisted by any aid. In the art of reigning, he had unfortunately made little progress or proficiency. Unambitious and moderate

moderate in his character, he formed no views of conquest. He even disapproved, though only passively, of the alliance with America, into which his Ministers had led him in the commencement of his reign; and suffered himself, with some degree of aversion and reluctance, to be made an accessory to the independence of the Thirteen Colonies.

His parts, however sluggish, inert, and limited, yet were not inadequate to the comprehension and discharge of the high duties, annexed to his station. He unquestionably loved his people, and passionately desired, at the price of every personal renunciation and sacrifice, to render his reign dear to France. Averse to cruelty, and of a nature accessible to the impressions of pity and humanity, he threw open the gates of the castle of Vincennes, which for ages had been one of the principal prisons of state; and mitigated, in numerous instances, the rigour of arbitrary power, which his grandfather had strengthened and abused. His behaviour on the
night

night of the 5th of October, 1789, has evinced, notwithstanding the doubts which have been entertained upon that point, that he did not want *personal* resolution or fortitude. But, the quality in which he has been eminently deficient, and to the want of which may be principally ascribed all the late calamities of his life, is *Political* courage and decision. In times of tranquillity and repose, this defect might not have been perceived; or, if discovered, might have yet been limited in its effects: in tempestuous periods, and popular insurrections, it has convulsed the monarchy, and menaced the existence of the throne itself.

The character of the Queen, though strongly contrasted with that of Louis the Sixteenth, was perhaps still more calculated to alienate the affections, and excite the clamours of the nation. Of a figure favoured by nature, and adorned by gracious and insinuating manners, she was formed to attach mankind. The short period which elapsed, subsequent to her
marriage

marriage with the Dauphin, in 1770, and previous to her ascending the throne, was marked by the most general partiality, and by all the flattering prognostics of poetry and genius, who anticipated the future glories and felicity of her reign*. Her education in the court of Vienna, under the severe inspection of Maria Theresa, a Princess

* It was during this brilliant and transitory portion of her life, that she was seen by the author of a production, which has recently made its appearance in this country; and which, from the celebrity of the writer, as well as from the interest excited by the subject itself, has been read with universal avidity. It is not my intention to criticise, or to appreciate the merits of a performance, which embraces so many objects, and ranges over so vast a field, as the late Revolution in France opens to a creative imagination. With some errors and some blemishes, it appears to me to be a most extraordinary exhibition of genius, fancy, and in many parts, of deep, able, and judicious reasoning. Its author is entitled to something more than the mere approbation, of every man who respects kingly power, or established Government; and who deprecates the violence of popular innovation. Perhaps the portrait of the Dauphiness, may be too highly coloured; but it is the colouring of Titian, and not of a common artist. Indeed, those who remember the present Queen before the death of Louis the Fifteenth, must admit, that she was then calculated to excite sentiments of personal admiration and delight, in no ordinary degree.

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eminent for chastity and piety, seemed in
 some measure, to guarantee the existence
 of these qualities in her daughter. But,
 Maria Antoinette appears to have inherited
 scarce any of the characteristic virtues, or
 vices of the Austrian family, except her
 attachment to the House from whence she
 sprung. The fond predictions of adula-
 tion, offered to the Dauphiness, were not
 realized by the Queen. Her levity of
 manners; her expensive prodigality; her
 dissipations; her attachments; her retire-
 ments; perhaps, more than all these de-
 fects, her supposed abuse of the ascendant,
 which she had acquired and preserved
 over her husband, gradually estranged every
 order of the people; and eventually, as
 the public embarrassments augmented, ren-
 dered her generally odious. Her actions
 were examined, with the most severe and
 unjust spirit of national enquiry. Her po-
 litical connections with the Imperial am-
 bassador, were as loudly arraigned on one
 hand, as her personal intimacy with the
 Count d'Artois, was strongly censured on
 the

the other. Imputations, the most injurious to her fame as a woman and a wife, were added to accusations of her disposition to sacrifice the interest, and squander the treasures of the kingdom over which she reigned, in order to aggrandize her brother the Emperor. She was accused of ministering to the weaknesses, and even stimulating the appetites of the King, with a view to avail herself of his fondness, or temporary privation of reflexion.

The continual visits, and long interviews which she accorded to Mademoiselle Bertin, excited sentiments of disapprobation in those, who thought the leisure of the first Queen in Europe, indecently thrown away in disquisitions upon a cap, or consultations upon a handkerchief. Her purchase of the palace of St. Cloud, in the midst of general pecuniary distress, was taxed with equal imprudence and profusion. Her frequent retirements to Trianon were stigmatized, as exhibiting scenes unfit for the public eye. The mysterious and inexplicable transaction, relative to the famous neck-

lace, asserted to have been purchased by her; although the Cardinal de Rohan and the Comtesse de la Motte were the victims of it, yet had left impressions disadvantageous to her honour, in the minds of a nation, disposed to see all her actions through an unfavourable medium. Her predilection for, and attachment to the Duchess de Polignac, suffered the most malignant comments of satirical prejudice; and the liberal donations, or high employments, with which that family was distinguished, necessarily added to the load of public execration. These accumulated topics of popular invective and animadversion, were circulated with rapidity, and received with equal avidity, by an ignorant and credulous multitude, who filled the arcades of the "Palais Royal," and who imbibed the most inveterate detestation of their Queen, as conceiving her the author of the public distress. They had already, in some degree, marked her out as a victim to the general indignation; and anxiously waited for the favourable
occasion,

occasion, which should liberate the Sovereign and the nation, from the pretended evils of her influence, and leave Louis the Sixteenth to the impulse of his natural beneficence and affection for his people.

The Count de Provence, the eldest of the King's two brothers, acted a very inferior and subordinate part upon this great theatre. Either destitute of talents to excite public attention, or repressing them from motives of prudence and situation, he appeared only in the back ground ; and formed a contrast to the imposing qualities, which distinguished the Count d'Artois. Of a figure much more graceful and elegant than either of his brothers, this Prince was likewise adorned with more dignified, if not more courteous manners. Attached to the Queen from similarity of taste and character, he even exceeded her in profusion, expence, and dissipation. After having passed the morning on the " Plaine de Sablons," in the dress and occupations of a jockey, he only retired from these fatigues, to repose in the
arms

arms of Mademoiselle Contat. His little palace of “ Bagatelle,” in the “ Bois de Boulogne,” was at once the scene of the most refined and voluptuous debauch, and of the most profligate pleasures, which luxury could devise or assemble. Two sons, already advancing fast towards manhood, and whose constitutions seemed to promise vigorous health, attracted the eyes of the nation; and gave him a manifest superiority to the Count de Provence, whose marriage had not been fruitful. The feeble and debilitated state of the Dauphin, whose infirmities already appeared to menace a premature end, left only the Duke de Normandie, between him and the eventual succession to the Crown. Though not endowed with any eminent talents, yet, as being of a character more decided and affirmative, than either the King or the Count de Provence, he came more forward to public view; and by his adherence to the Queen, influenced very considerably on affairs of state.

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At a greater distance from the throne, but decorated with the title of First Prince of the Blood, was seen the Duke of Orleans. Possessed of an immense revenue, and having in reversion all the domains of his father-in-law, the Duke de Penthièvre, he might be esteemed the richest subject in Europe. His reputation for generosity and munificence, bore, however, no proportion to his ample possessions: on the contrary, though profuse in the gratification of his appetites, he was accused by the popular voice, of an intention to the arts of œconomy, unworthy of his high birth and splendid fortune. Emulous of being thought to resemble Henry the Fourth, and the Regent Duke of Orleans, from both of which Princes he derived his descent; he had no similarity to either, except in the foibles which shaded the character of the former, and in the vices which disgraced the conduct of the latter. The beneficence, the heroic valour, and clemency of mind, which characterised the King of Navarre, were not to be traced
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in his degenerate grandson. The sublime talents, the military genius, and the various endowments of a statesman and a general, which combined in the Regent, were as vainly sought in the Duke of Orleans.

Abandoned to pleasures of every description, he yet had no elevation nor refinement in his amusements. His personal courage, which had sustained some injury, and excited some sarcastic comments, from his behaviour under d'Orvilliers in 1778, had not been retrieved by his unpropitious attempt to signalize himself, when he accompanied Charles and Robert into the air. The malignant reflexions, formerly thrown out upon his intrepidity as a naval officer, were followed by pasquinades upon his supposed apprehensions in the balloon; and he was said to have been as unfortunate in the park of Meudon, where he alighted from his aerial excursion, as he had been at an earlier period of his life, in the vicinity of the islands of Ushant. Notwithstanding

ing these aspersions and defects, he yet possessed qualities, which if conducted by judgment, might have redeemed him from the load of obloquy under which he was oppressed. His talents were certainly above mediocrity; his mind enlarged, his manners condescending and popular, and his understanding cultivated by letters, and an extensive acquaintance with mankind.

He was the only Prince of the House of Bourbon, who had ever visited England in person; the Duke d'Alençon, brother to Henry the Third of France, having been the last, who in the prosecution of his design to marry Elizabeth, had passed over into these kingdoms. The disorders in the finances, and the desperate, or arbitrary measures, to which the Court was necessitated perpetually to have recourse, in order to raise new loans and obtain supplies, had given the Duke of Orleans an occasion, of which he gladly availed himself, to regain his long lost popularity. To this public and ostensible cause of his alienation from the Court, were added

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some private misunderstandings which had their origin in the interference of the Queen, to prevent an alliance which was projected, between the eldest son of the Count d'Artois, and the daughter of the Duke of Orleans : a marriage, which it was more than possible, might eventually elevate the young Princess to the Throne of France. Animated and stimulated by these motives, he seemed to awake from the dissolute pleasures in which he had been plunged, and to assume the more dignified and ingratiating character, of an opposer of despotism, and a protector of the people. This change of conduct soon produced its full effect ; and he passed with the most rapid transition, from the contempt and reprobation of the inhabitants of Paris, to the height of favour and general attachment.

Such was the aspect which the Court of Versailles presented at the commencement of the year 1787, and such were the principal characters and personages of which it was composed. The sources of discontent,
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and even of revolt and insurrection, were numerous and augmenting. The ordinary channels of revenue were either dried up, or had become inadequate to the exigencies of the Government. Recourse was therefore reluctantly had, to other modes of obtaining supplies ; and the convocation of the “Notables” was proposed by Calonne to the King, and adopted immediately, as the only remaining expedient.

In these critical circumstances of perplexity and distress, Vergennes, whose high reputation and superior talents, had hitherto diffused a lustre over the councils of France, and alone sustained the tottering load of public credit and national grandeur: this celebrated Minister, the successor of Maurepas, and who, since his death, had during eight years, held the first place in the Administration, was removed by death from a scene, to which all his abilities would probably have been found unequal. Fortunate in his alliances, in his wars, in his negotiations, in his acqui-

tion of fame, in the enjoyment of the royal favour and the popular opinion ; he was yet more happy, in not surviving these frail and uncertain possessions. Unlike to Louvois and to Fleury, he neither forfeited the affection of his Sovereign, nor outlived his own talents and capacity. Admired, regretted, and lamented, his death seemed to be the signal, which unloosed the jarring elements of civil commotion, and which marked the æra of the extinction of tranquillity and obedience.

The dismissal of Calonne followed in a few weeks ; and the elevation of an ecclesiastic, the Archbishop of Toulouse, to the supreme controul of the finances, whatever expectations it might at first awaken, of alleviation and redress, only tended in the event to aggravate the national calamities, and to encrease the popular discontent. New systems, equally unproductive as the preceding, and only calculated for temporary relief, afforded neither a remedy to the pressing necessities of the court, nor to the clamorous grievances

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ances of the people. The “ Notables” were found to be equally incompetent and averse, to adduce any cure for these multiplied distempers of the state. They were therefore dissolved ; and the nation already began to demand an assembly of the “ States General,” as the last and only measure, competent to extricate and retrieve them, from the danger of impending bankruptcy and ruin.

But the troubles and internal feuds of the Dutch commonwealth, which had been long nourished and fed by the political liberality of the cabinet of Versailles ; which had grown up under the fostering hand of Vergennes, and which a series of deep and artful negotiations had inflamed and augmented, now approached rapidly to their crisis. Never could they have attained to their maturity, at a more inauspicious moment for France ; and never was the triumph of fortune over the machinations of policy, more conspicuously exemplified.

William

William the Fifth, Prince of Orange, possessed the Stadtholderate of the United Provinces. Allied by name, rather than by blood, to the great House of Nassau, so fertile in heroes and in legislators, few traces of the sublime qualities which have rendered that family immortal, were to be discovered in their successor. But, in the Princess his wife, sprung from the union of the houses of Brandenburg and Nassau, the characteristic energy of both was visible. Driven out of the Province of Holland, by the indignities and insults, with which the republican faction had treated the Prince, whom they had compelled to retire to Nimeguen; she had the courage to set out for the Hague, and, unattended by any guards, to traverse a hostile country, in the hope of adjusting by her presence, address, and flexibility, the points in dispute between her husband and the States. In this arduous and delicate attempt she was frustrated, and even her person laid under an arrest, by the brutality of one of the military officers,

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in the service of the Republic. Obligated to abandon her project, and to return to Nimeguen, she invoked the protection and assistance of the King of Prussia, to re-instate the exiled Stadtholder in the hereditary dignities and offices, of which he had been so unjustly, and unconstitutionally deprived. It was not to her uncle that she addressed these entreaties. The great Frederick was no more: he had paid the common tribute to mortality, and had expired at Potzdam in August 1786, under the accumulating weight of age and diseases. But, though he no longer animated in person the councils of Berlin, the vigour of his genius survived: it seemed even to have attained new force in the hands of a Sovereign, whose more active period of life, led him to adopt measures of decision, and whose near relationship to the Princess of Orange, stimulated him to warmer exertions in her behalf.

The juncture was favourable to the Prussian interposition; and England, under the auspices of a Minister, prompt to
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feize the occasion of again re-appearing with dignity and effect on the Continent, avowedly joined and aided the attack, upon the enemies of the House of Orange. An army of about fifteen thousand men, commanded by the first military genius in Europe, the Duke of Brunswick, entered the territories of the States General, in September, 1787, and over-ran with the same rapidity, that Louis the Fourteenth had done in the last century, the province of Holland. Amsterdam itself, the centre of disaffection, and the last asylum of the French and republican factions, after a short and ineffectual struggle, capitulated, and received the conqueror. A complete, but almost bloodless revolution was effected; and the Hague, so long a prey to discord and to animosity, saw the Stadtholder return, and occupy his high station, with every expression of loyalty and attachment.

France, embarrassed, and incapable from her domestic misfortunes, of interfering either with honour to herself, or efficacy to
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her friends; though she appeared to make a feeble effort in their favour, yet ultimately gave way to the storm, and consented to disarm; nay more, publicly to deny her having ever intended to sustain that party, in whose support she had expended her treasures, and for whom, in more auspicious æras, she would have involved Europe in blood and hostility. The high reputation which so signal a success reflected on the councils of Great Britain, was contrasted and rendered more splendid, by a comparison with the fallen state of her ancient rival, who, only a few years preceding these events, in conjunction with America, had seemed to give laws in every quarter of the globe. The energy and wise precaution of the Minister did not, however, remit its vigilance, or content itself with having liberated the Dutch Republic, and reinstated the Stadtholder. Attentive to profit of this fortunate and propitious moment, and to avail himself of the gratitude, with which the assistance extended to Holland had equally

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impressed the Government and the people, he cemented those sentiments, by immediately framing, and eventually concluding a defensive treaty with the United Provinces. It was signed in April, 1788, and was evidently built on the model of that, which had been terminated under the auspices of Vergennes, between France and Holland, towards the close of the year 1785. Reciprocal succours, naval and military, were stipulated; and the bands of political union were drawn as close, as human wisdom and mutual interest could devise.

This alliance, so much approved, and so highly beneficial to England, was succeeded by a second, similar in its tenor, nature, and tendency, between the Courts of St. James's and Berlin, which was ratified in the month of August, of the same year. They had been preceded by a subsidiary treaty, between England and the Landgrave of Hesse, which enabled the former power, on the payment of a certain annual sum, to demand from the latter,

latter, at a very short notice, a body of twelve thousand troops.

Thus, in the space of only four years, which might be said to have elapsed since the complete triumph of the Sovereign and the nation over the “ Coalition,” had Great Britain, under the conduct of a Minister, who had not yet attained his thirtieth year, risen from a state of unexampled depression, to her ancient superiority among the European kingdoms. The finances had been re-established, by a system of unremitting and severe œconomy. Commerce, aided and emancipated by the wise regulations of an enlarged policy, opened new sources, and navigated seas hitherto unknown or unexplored, in the prosecution of its objects. Public credit attained a point of elevation and permanence, unparalleled since the commencement of the unfortunate war with America. The councils of England, conducted on principles, not of a crooked duplicity, but of rectitude and magnanimity, excited respect and approbation in the surrounding

states, while they diffused prosperity and felicity over every part of the island.

Political alliances and connections on the Continent, added the prospect of stability to every measure, which was calculated for internal security or commercial advantage. The calamities of Lord North's Administration, and the anarchy which succeeded that unfortunate period: the defalcation of thirteen provinces, and of both the Floridas from the empire: the disgraces of Saratoga, and of the Chesapeake; the tumults, and conflagration of London: in a word, the varied and accumulated misfortunes, which for a long series of years oppressed, and had almost overwhelmed the commonwealth, were already erased from the recollection. A mild and happy calm had smoothed these troubled waves. The Sovereign was deservedly dear to every rank and order of his subjects, who united in regarding him as their father and benefactor. The Government, beloved at home, was respected abroad: and the people, happy beyond the example of former

former times, looked up with equal affection and veneration, towards the source of these multiplied benefits.

But in the midst of this flattering aspect of affairs, an unexpected and disastrous change was preparing to manifest itself, which no human prudence could have foreseen, or precautions delayed. We were destined to experience in its fullest extent, the mutability of fortune, and the fragility of greatness; to hold out a memorable lesson to our own, and to future times, that the splendor and felicity of man, however solid the foundations on which they may seem to repose, are in the hands of a superior Being, who confers, or withdraws them in an instant. I am arrived at that awful and affecting period, when the feelings of all those who shall peruse these sheets, will anticipate my own; and which, from a variety of motives, I should wish to cover under a veil of oblivion, if the publicity of the great leading facts, and still more, if the instruction conveyed by the narration itself,

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as one of the most interesting portions of modern annals, did not supersede my personal inclinations. It is not, however, either in my plan or my intention, to relate the *private* history of that extraordinary period; or to drag into daylight facts and anecdotes, which, curious and entertaining as they must appear to posterity, are, in every sense, unfit for the perusal of the present age. Sentiments of duty, delicacy, and respect, towards a Prince inexpressibly dear to his people: towards a Queen, who during near thirty years, and in every relation of domestic life, has been blameless and exemplary: towards those illustrious persons, on whom the sceptre of George the Third must, in the ordinary progress of events, at some future, and as we trust, far distant period, devolve: even motives of prudence, decorum, and propriety, arrest my pen; and prevent me from shading a picture, the outline only of which it is either wise or necessary, to hold up to the public eye, placed as we are so near the object.

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The very nature of the subject is, indeed, such as to add peculiar embarrassments, to those general ones, which present themselves in the way of every man, who shall venture to relate the transactions of the time in which he lives, and of which he forms himself, though an imperceptible, yet a real and efficient part. Nor is it, even, a sufficient justification or inducement to undertake such a task, that the mild genius of the century in which we write, or the freedom which enables us to dictate without apprehension, appear to liberate us from every restraint. There are feelings in a generous mind, anterior to all written law, and far superior in their operation to those regulations, which are imposed by Courts of Judicature, or legislative bodies. It is to these restrictions that I shall subject my pen, while the great chain of events may yet be presented to the English people, and the fidelity of historical truth be preserved inviolate. “*Ut, non modo casus, eventusque rerum, qui plerumque fortuiti sunt, sed ratio etiam, causæque noscantur.*” Like the sublime writer whom I have just cited,

cited, and who flourished under the golden reign of Trajan, we too, “*rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ sentias dicere licet,*” may, unawed by power, affix the sentiment of approbation and of censure, in conformity to our own conviction. Such is: equally my design and my determination. But it is only for those, who can elevate their minds above the little partialities and prejudices of the day, that it belongs to appreciate the performance of this promise; and to decide, how far the present work may venture to lay claim to any portion of Roman energy and freedom, or how far the immortal writings of antiquity would be sullied and degraded, by a comparison with this production.

It is not easy to imagine or to parallel, in the history of the present century, a period of more perfect serenity, than that which England presented in the autumn of 1788. The King, accompanied by the Queen, and surrounded by his family, after having tried the effects of a relaxation from public business, and of the medicinal

cinal waters of Cheltenham, had returned to Windsor; not, indeed, in a state of vigorous health, but by no means in any such declining state of indisposition, as to excite alarm among his subjects. The Prince of Wales, as usual, passed the summer at his Marine Pavillion, at Bright-helmstone. Mr. Pitt, occupied in the functions of his station, was detained in the vicinity of the capital; while Mr. Fox, whose faculties of body and mind had been not a little exercised and exhausted, by a toilsome attendance in Covent Garden, during the extreme heats of August, which was thought requisite to secure the election of Lord John Townsend, as member for Westminster; indulged a degree of necessary repose, and withdrew for a short time from the hurry of political life. He quitted England, and repaired to Switzerland and Italy, as a scene calculated to amuse and entertain, while it restored and invigorated a constitution, impaired by constant exertion. The great leaders of ministry and opposition, having laid

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aside their political animosities, were dispersed in peaceful inactivity, over every part of the kingdom. From this state of public recreation and felicity, the nation was rudely and suddenly awoke, by the reports of his Majesty being attacked with an unexpected and dangerous illness. The precise nature of it was for several days unascertained and unexplained, even to those whose residence near the court, should have enabled them to obtain early and authentic information. Meanwhile, fame augmented the evil, and the death of the Sovereign was believed to have either already taken place, or to be imminent or inevitable.

The grief and distraction which were manifested in every part of the island, on the publication of this calamitous event, can be only compared with that of the Roman people, on the news of Germanicus being seized with mortal symptoms at Antioch; as the distressful situation of the Queen, bore some resemblance to that of Agrippina.

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“ *Passim silentia et gemitus, nihil compositum in ostentationem ; et quanquam neque insignibus lugentium abstinere, altius animis mœrebant.*” Time, however, gradually divulged the truth, and changed the apprehensions of the nation for the situation of the King. His disorder was understood to have fallen upon the brain, and to have produced, as might be expected, a temporary privation of reason. As the cause of this alienation of mind was extraneous and violent, it might be hoped, that it could only be of short duration : but the issue was uncertain, while the suspension of all government, and of every function attached to the kingly dignity, was immediate and indisputable. A species of interregnum, in fact took place ; though unaccompanied by any of those circumstances, which usually characterize and accompany that unfortunate state. The kingdom, anxious, and with eyes directed towards their Sovereign, betrayed no symptoms of confusion, anarchy, or civil commotion. The First Minister continued to exer-

cise, by a general submission and consent, the powers delegated to him before the King's indisposition; and the political machine, well constructed, and properly organized, sustained no derangement or injury whatsoever from this shock, except those inseparably connected with delay in the transactions or negotiations, pending with foreign courts.

Meanwhile, the Heir to the monarchy had quitted Brighthelmstone, on the first information of his father's malady, and repaired to Windsor, whither he was followed by the Duke of York. Physicians were called in, though ineffectually; and as the nature of the distemper and of its final termination, opened a wide field to conjecture, change, and alteration, an express was sent to overtake Mr. Fox, in whatever part of the Continent he might be found; and to intreat, that he would return without delay to England.

The two Houses of Parliament, in consequence of the preceding prorogation, met in a few days subsequent to these extraordinary

traordinary events. The general agitation and curiosity, even if they had not been aided by other emotions of hope and fear, of ambition, and of public duty, would alone have produced a numerous attendance. Mr. Pitt opened the subject of their meeting, in a very concise and pathetic manner; lamented the occasion, expressed his hope that the cause would speedily be removed, and in pursuance of that idea, advised an immediate adjournment for a fortnight. The proposition was received in deep silence, by the opposite side of the House, and assented to in mute acquiescence. Their leader was not yet arrived; and consequently time was wanted, to adjust and determine on their plan of action, under circumstances so delicate and unprecedented. In the interval which took place, his Majesty was removed to the palace of Kew. The Prince of Wales returned to Carlton House; and Mr. Fox, impatiently expected, after a journey which he performed with incredible expedition from Bologna, in a very infirm
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and disordered state of health, arrived in London, and assumed his just pre-eminence in the counsels of his party.

Those counsels evinced their nature and object, as soon as the late adjournment was at an end; and Mr. Fox, generously, though perhaps injudiciously, stepping forward in the senate, rather laid claim to the vacant sceptre, in the name and on the behalf of the Heir Apparent, as belonging and devolving to him of right; than preferred his pretensions with modesty and submission, at the bar of the assembled nation. Perhaps a step more injurious to the great personage whom it was intended to serve, or more pregnant with consequences to be deprecated, of every kind, could not have been devised or executed. Perhaps, too, when time shall have withdrawn that curtain, which is still stretched across these recent and interesting events, we may discover, that in advancing so unqualified a demand of the regency, he did not precisely follow the dictates of his own elevated mind, and illuminated judgment.

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It awakened a jealous spirit of enquiry, into the supposed origin and foundation of that asserted right, in the breasts even of the most liberal and unprejudiced. - It compelled Administration, to probe that problematical and obscure part of the British Constitution. It reminded those, to whom the writings of Shakespear were familiar, of that affecting and pathetic scene, where Henry the Fourth, under a temporary privation of his faculties, finds on his recovery, that his eldest son has carried away the insignia of his royal dignity, which, had he only waited a few hours, would have been his by devolution.

The discernment of Mr. Pitt saw, and instantly enabled him to profit, of this error in his antagonist. He demanded the discussion and decision of so great and leading a principle, which led to conclusions unlimited and undefined, as well as subversive of the tenure, on which a King of England had originally received his crown ; previous to any ulterior disposition and distribution of offices. He was joined
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by the majority of the House in this requisition, and thus commenced his resistance, under auspices and circumstances peculiarly fortunate. It was in vain that the Prince of Wales, already rendered sensible of the injury which his cause had sustained, in Parliament and among the people, by Mr. Fox's unqualified claim of right, endeavoured to wave and prevent all further discussion of so invidious a subject. It was in vain that the Duke of York, in his brother's name, and by his authority, renounced any such assumption of power, and made this public declaration in the House of Lords. Nor was Mr. Fox's attempt to qualify his first assertion, and to give it a more mitigated sense, received with better success in the other House. Parliament, roused to a sense of the necessity of declaring itself solely competent to fill the vacant throne, proceeded to that great act, without circumlocution or delay; and having pronounced upon this important preliminary, then decided, that the Prince of Wales
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should be invited and requested to accept the Regency, under certain limitations.

The month of December elapsed in these contests, and the year 1789 commenced under the most gloomy presages. Mutual asperity and reproach embittered every debate. No appearances of convalescence or recovery, so ardently anticipated by the nation, had yet manifested themselves in the malady of the King. In addition to the keenest sensations of private distress, as a mother and a wife, the Queen saw herself on the point of being placed in the most painful, though indispensably necessary situation; that of being entrusted with the care of the Royal Person, and of standing in a sort of rivalry and competition to her eldest son. The Prince, who aspired to a Regency, unfettered by any restrictions, betrayed in his reply to a letter, which the First Minister addressed to him, and in which the great features of that intended delegation of the Royal power were delineated, his warm resentment and dissatisfaction, at many of those defalcations.

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He concluded, however, by reluctantly and coldly consenting to receive it, curtailed and degraded as it might be, by Ministerial or Parliamentary distrust.

A second examination of the physicians, who had attended his Majesty during the course of his disorder, which took place before a Committee of the House of Commons, and which was certainly not conducted on the part of Opposition, with either delicacy or judgment, tended to throw very little light on the great object of public enquiry; the probable duration and period of this afflicting malady. Mr. Pitt constantly and warmly maintained, the probability of its happy termination; and regarding it as neither distant nor hopeless, made the resumption of the Royal power by the Sovereign with facility and celerity, as soon as he should be enabled to wield the sceptre, the first and leading principle of all his measures and propositions.

The adherents of the Prince of Wales, saw the prospect of his father's recovery
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through a very different medium, and conceived of it not only as improbable, but as hourly augmenting in that improbability. They were sustained in this opinion by Warren, as the Minister was confirmed in his opposite sentiment, by Willis ; two physicians, on whose contradictory prognostics and apprehensions each party implicitly relied. The former, at the summit of his profession, and unquestionably possessed of great medical skill, was yet accused by the public voice, of leaning in his inclination towards the party of the Prince. The latter, brought from a distant province, to attend the Sovereign under his severe disorder, and having been peculiarly conversant in that species of disease, boldly and early asserted, that he entertained scarcely any doubts of the King's perfect re-establishment, at no remote period. The event fully justified his prediction.

Meanwhile, the introduction of the propositions, upon which the Regency Bill was meant to be founded, and the restrictions intended to be imposed, upon the

power of the future Regent, which were brought forward by the First Minister in the House of Commons, carried the rage and virulence of party to its utmost height. The negation of the power of creating Peers : the nomination of a council to assist the Queen : and the complete reservation of the Royal household, were all arraigned and condemned in the warmest terms, by Mr. Fox, as dictated only by ambition, and not originating in state necessity, or even in regard to the situation of the Monarch. The history of France, under the unhappy reign of Charles the Sixth, was cited, as bearing a manifest resemblance to the present disastrous period ; and a Queen, equally venerated and beloved by the nation, was compared to the unnatural Isabella of Bavaria ; as her son the Dauphin's abandoned and persecuted state, was asserted to be similar to that of the Prince of Wales.

Unmoved by these invectives, and sustained by conscious rectitude of intention, the Minister steadily pursued his way : nor was he, in this critical and distressing moment

ment, deserted by either House of Parliament. The Chancellor, who, at the commencement of the King's illness, had been supposed to have listened to proposals for forming a part of a new Administration; anxious to evince the falsehood of so unjust an aspersión, and to give the most unequivocal proofs of loyalty and of adherence to his Sovereign, under the present circumstances, collected all the energy of his mind, in the various appeals, which he successfully made, to the honour and patriotism of the House of Lords.

In this stage of the public business, at a moment when the King's situation appeared most to exclude hope, and while the House of Commons were fully occupied, in framing the principal component parts of the act, which was to establish the Regency, Mr. Fox withdrew from the scene, and quitting London, retired to Bath. His disordered state of health was assigned as a pretext for this secession, at so extraordinary and critical a juncture; but the public conceived the motives of it to originate, in very
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different causes. Dissention and jealousy had already pervaded the counsels of Carlton House. The distribution of offices under the approaching Regency, had produced alienation among the chiefs. An interior Cabinet, different in its views, and opposite in its objects, to the great ostensible leaders of the party attached to the Prince of Wales, had set up a separate standard, and formed a distinct interest. Difference of opinion had manifested itself, upon some very delicate, and personal points. Cabal and intrigue had penetrated into the closet. His Royal Highness was generally supposed to have experienced difficulties, if not peremptory refusals of gratifying his wishes, on the part of the Duke of Portland; and that, in relation to persons and things, peculiarly near his heart.

These numerous sources of disunion were still however, in some measure, concealed from view, by their very nature, and the mutual interest or honour of the parties themselves. The great acts of parliamentary legislation proceeded, and were
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nearly approaching to their termination. A very short period, probably not exceeding three days, must have completed the bill, which was to declare the incapacity of the Sovereign to conduct the national affairs, and to transfer the sceptre, though with diminished influence, to his son. The members of Administration were on the point of resigning their charges, and the new Ministry, already settled, prepared to enter on office : while the English people, fondly attached by every sense of loyalty and affection, to their Monarch, as well as from gratitude and esteem to the First Minister, in dejection and silence looked on, and saw the Government transferred to others, who, whatever abilities they might collectively possess, certainly neither merited nor enjoyed, the general approbation and confidence.

But the term of interregnum and misfortune was now arrived ; and the impending calamity, which had menaced England with all the evils of a Regency, far more to be deprecated and dreaded than those,

those, from which the country had escaped in 1784, was suddenly and unexpectedly dissipated. The disorder, under which the King had suffered during three months, and whose violence had hitherto appeared to baffle all medical skill and exertion, gradually, but rapidly, subsided. Sanity of mind and reason resumed their seat, and left no trace of their temporary subversion. Time confirmed the cure, and restored to his subjects a Prince, rendered supremely and peculiarly dear to them, by the recent prospect and apprehension of his loss. The vision of a Régency faded and disappeared, as the Sovereign came forward to public view, and was totally extinguished by his resumption of all the regal functions.

The demonstrations of national joy, far exceeded any recorded in the English annals, and were probably more real and unfeigned, than ever were offered on similar occasions. It was not only that a King, beloved and respected, was recovered from the most afflicting of
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all situations incident to humanity, and enabled to re-ascend the throne. Sentiments of disapprobation and of general condemnation, affixed to the measures and conduct of the opposite party, heightened the emotions of pleasure, by a comparison with that state, from which the kingdom had been so fortunately delivered. No efforts of despotism, or mandates of absolute power, could have produced the illuminations, which the capital exhibited in testimony of its loyalty; and these proofs of attachment were renewed, and even augmented, on the occasion of his Majesty's first appearance in public, and his solemn procession to St. Paul's, to return thanks to Heaven for his recovery. Serenity and tranquillity, so long banished, resumed their place, and soon effaced the recollection of a calamity, not more awful and alarming in its appearance and progress, than speedily and happily extinguished.

The attention of Europe, which had been so powerfully attracted towards England, during the continuance of the severe indis-

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position of George the Third, was now to be directed to another object, scarcely less productive of change, and big with the most important consequences. France, so long inured to servitude, and only tracing the existence of her liberties, in the page of forgotten historians, or antiquaries: whose fetters, originally imposed by Richlieu, and strengthened by Mazarin, had been rivetted by the lapse of near two centuries; by the proud tyranny of Louis the Fourteenth, and by the profligate despotism of his successor: France, stimulated by the writings of genius and philosophy, which in defiance of arbitrary power, have illuminated and dignified the present age, aspired to freedom. The weakness of the Sovereign; the incapacity or timidity of his Ministers; the exhausted state of the treasury and finances; the unexampled and pertinacious opposition of the Parliament of Paris, to register, or sanction the Royal edicts for the imposition of new taxes; the failure of the harvests, and consequent augmentation in the price of bread; all these

these concurring circumstances contributed to produce, and accelerate a revolution.

The various Parliaments of the kingdom, in terms of energy and firmness, to which they had been long disused, clamorously demanded the immediate convocation of the "States General," as the only constitutional, or adequate remedy to the distempers of the state. They adhered to this requisition, not only in defiance of the displeasure of the Crown, which was manifested by the banishment of the Parliament of Paris, to Troyes in Champagne; but in opposition to their own essential interests, and even eventual existence. The nobility, attached by so many ties to the Sovereign, and the natural supporters of his prerogative; irritated at the attempt made by Calonne, and persisted in by the Archbishop of Toulouse, to deprive them of their exemption from the projected land tax, or "impot territorial," joined the courts of judicature in their refusal to register the measures proposed, and forsook their hereditary maxims of policy, to adopt

the popular party. The irresolute conduct of the First Minister, under these delicate and trying circumstances, invigorated and emboldened the enemies of Government; and the spirit of remonstrance, complaint, and menace, diffeminated with industry, became daily more general and alarming.

The Archbishop, after many inefficient or unsuccessful plans for the re-establishment of the finances, and some ill-conceived exertions of severity and power against his opponents, felt himself unequal to combat the gathering storm of national indignation; and retiring from a situation of danger and eminence, abandoned his master to the mercy of events. He even quitted France, and passed the Alps into Italy; as Calonne, under similar expressions of general resentment, had done in the preceding year; when finding the Royal protection withdrawn, and already impeached by the Parliament of Paris, he retreated first into Holland, and from thence crossed the sea to England. In this perplexed situation, Louis the Sixteenth,

teenth, compelled to dismiss one Minister, and forsaken by another ; surrounded with embarrassments, and having only a choice of evils ; conscious that the very foundations of the throne and monarchy were crumbling under his feet ; endowed with no talents or great qualities, which might enable him to sustain his own dignity, coerce his subjects, or restore order and energy in the public affairs : alarmed and terrified, at the demonstrations of discontent which appeared in the capital, and the provinces : under the pressure of these various considerations and apprehensions, he embraced the resolution of meeting the wishes of the nation ; and if driven to the last necessity, of laying the distresses of the Crown, before the representatives of the people.

Neckar, who had conducted the finances during the prosecution of the late war with England, and who had attained a very unmerited degree of popularity since his dismissal from office, was reinstated in his employment of Comptroller General. The avowed enemy of Calonne, whom
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he accused of peculation and malversation, he had appealed to the public by various controversial writings, defamatory of that Minister, and tending to criminate him as a defaulter, in the eyes of France and of all Europe. The famous “*Compte rendu au Roi*” in 1781, in which he laid open to his own Sovereign, and to all mankind, the expenditure, revenue, and resources of his country, may be regarded not only as an unprecedented disclosure, of the hitherto sacred and unrevealed arcana of the French monarchy; but as having operated, much beyond the immediate and ostensible pretext of his own justification, by awakening, and directing the reflexions of every class of men, towards the profuse distribution of the public treasure.

Simple in his exterior, and decent in his manners, Neckar attained the fame of disinterestedness and probity. Equally republican in birth and in principles, he flattered by these circumstances, the prevailing spirit and genius of the times. Avowedly odious to the party of the Queen, and
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of the Count d'Artois, he could hardly be supposed to possess the real confidence or attachment of the King, who had only been driven by his own distress, and the current of popular favor, to have recourse to his assistance and services. Deficient in all the essential qualities of a great Minister, and ignorant of those enlarged principles of taxation and revenue, which were alone competent to the extrication of so vast a monarchy as France, he supplied these defects, by little arts and narrow projects, adapted to the exigencies of the day. In the Canton of Bern, his talents might have entitled him to respect, and they would have been in their proper sphere. An able arithmetician, but a feeble statesman, he only appeared in the first station of finance, to evince how inadequate were his abilities, to that dangerous elevation ; and after vainly attempting to sustain an ill-founded reputation, he has now retired to oblivion, un lamented, and almost unnoticed by that nation, among whom he was so lately idolized.

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Although the recall and nomination of Neckar, appeared to give general satisfaction, and awakened the hopes of his numerous and sanguine admirers, yet these symptoms of approbation gradually subsided. The temporary effect of his name, in raising the public credit, produced no permanent or beneficial consequence. Languor and debility characterized every operation of finance; and Government became less competent to resist the encroachments of the people, in proportion as its embarrassment multiplied. Paris, rendered clamorous by the high price of grain, and attributing this scarcity, more to the arts of monopoly, and even to the indirect interference of the Court, in permitting the exportation of corn, than to any deficiency in the productions of the earth, proceeded to acts of violence, bordering on insurrection. The introduction of a body of military forces into the capital, quelled, not without a considerable effusion of blood, these first symptoms of revolt, and restored a degree of tranquillity and submission.

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Notwithstanding this apparent check to the spirit of popular innovation, every circumstance tended to evince, that the numerous subjects of complaint on the side of the People, could not be extinguished, by any expedient short of unconditional submission on the part of the Crown ; or of an appeal to the sword, if the former measure should be thought too degrading, for a Prince born in the purple, and accustomed to regard his power as unlimited and irresistible. The naked and unprotected Majesty of the throne, no longer environed, as under Louis the Fourteenth, by a splendid household, and the pomp of royalty, formed a very inefficient barrier against a nation, enthusiastic in their demands of a constitution ; and who seemed to be determined to seize the favourable moment, for curtailing the odious prerogative, of issuing “ Lettres de Cachet,” and of raising supplies by arbitrary mandate. The levities and profusion of the Queen ; the haughty tone, which was assumed by the Count d’Artois on several occasions ; and

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the supposed subservience of the King to his wife and brother, encreased the phrenzy for reformation, and added to the general effervescence. Yielding with ungracious reluctance, to these manifestations of the approaching storm, the King consented to adopt the humiliating and unwelcome advice, offered by his Minister, of convoking the States General at Versailles : but, at the same time, stimulated to resistance by his own feelings, as well as by the exhortations of those, who were continually near his person, he began to prepare for extremities, and to assemble forces.

The Duke of Orleans, who, at an early period of the present troubles, had been ordered to retire to his seat at Reinsy, on account of the active part which he had taken in opposition to the Government, had obtained, from the lenity or indulgence of the Court, permission to revisit Paris. Less sensible to this mark of favour, than irritated by the act of severity which preceded it, he determined on revenge, and embraced with ardor the popular cause. His high quality, and near alliance to
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the Sovereign ; his immense revenues ; his central situation at the “ Palais Royal,” in the heart of the metropolis ; his numerous connexions, and extensive influence : this combination of circumstances, enabled him to become a very dangerous and formidable opponent to the Crown, in its present fallen and debilitated state. He probably did not apprehend the extremities, to which his own intrigues might conduct a tumultuous assembly ; or he might fallaciously conceive, that he should always be able to direct its operations, and to superintend its movements. It is even possible, as his enemies assert, that the flattering prospect of the Regency, which already opened itself to his ambition, as neither a remote nor improbable event, conduced to determine his line of action, and to prevent him from seeing the precipices, with which such a pursuit was surrounded. He was elected a member of the States General, for Crepy in Valois, and took his seat in the Assembly.

This extraordinary convocation of all the orders of the kingdom, which had

not been summoned since the Regency of Mary of Medicis, and whose very existence seemed to have been annihilated, by three long reigns of arbitrary power, was opened with the utmost solemnity by Louis the Sixteenth, assisted by the Princes of the Blood, and accompanied with all the external splendor, becoming so august a ceremony. Many sources of internal discord and confusion, almost inevitable from the competition, and opposite pretensions or interest, of the Nobility, Clergy, and Third Estate; the facility of introducing corruption, among so vast and mixed a body of men; above all, the loyalty and adherence, naturally to be expected from the two first classes of the states: these inherent vices in their formation, inspired the Court with a confidence, that no unanimity or exertion of vigour, would ever characterize so heterogeneous a mass. The first proceedings of the Assembly justified these expectations. Much time elapsed in disputes, arising from the incompatibility of the respective demands, of the different orders; and though these

these were at last happily terminated, by the Nobility and Clergy renouncing, or acquiescing in the claims of the delegates of the people; yet the Sovereign still possessed great resources, and various means of protracting or averting any act, militating vitally against his prerogatives.

Had Louis the Sixteenth been left to the impulse and direction of his own character, it is probable that he would have continued to yield to the encroachments of the democratical spirit, which had already produced so many involuntary concessions, on the part of the Crown; and which, increasing in vigour as it proceeded, avowedly aimed at giving birth to a free constitution, and a limited monarchy. He wanted all that energy, elevation, and courage, requisite to sustain him in a struggle against his people, and to enable him to repress their attempts at emancipation. But in the Queen and the Count d'Artois, resentment at the inroads of a nation, whom they had long regarded, as only formed for servitude; and the habitual exercise of arbitrary power, warmly

warmly impelled to every exertion for its preservation ; while it dictated the most decided measures, for repressing and chastizing a mutinous and discontented capital.

They united their efforts, to sustain the irresolution of the King, and succeeded. It was determined in the cabinet of Versailles, to adopt the most vigorous principles ; to dissolve the National Assembly ; to dismiss the Comptroller-General ; and to punish the insolence of the metropolis. Prudence and address were, however, requisite to mature these counsels, and to facilitate their execution. A great body of forces, principally consisting of the Swiss and German regiments in the service of France, was gradually collected from different provinces. The Marechal de Broglio, an officer of high military reputation, and of known attachment to the Crown, was named to the supreme command. Every necessary preparation for maintaining the Royal authority, if necessary, by the most spirited and severe acts of punishment, was made, without even
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affectation of disguise or concealment. The capital, incapable of resistance, and unconscious even of its own capacities of defence ; destitute of leaders, of arms, and of troops, waited patiently the chastizement which impended.

Paris, involved in circumstances more distressful even than those in which it stood, when invested by Henry the Third in 1589, and under an equal necessity of submitting to the conditions, which an incensed monarch might have dictated ; was snatched from pillage, by a revolution not less sudden and unexpected, than that which, two centuries preceding, had deprived Henry the Third of his life. The frantic and sanguinary zeal of a Monk, effected this deliverance in one instance ; in the other, the Parisians were indebted to the timidity, delays, and want of decision in the Court. During the first days of July, the metropolis, though turbulent and riotous, made no exertions to oppose the army, by which it was encircled and surrounded. The partizans and supporters of the Royal power were numerous, and
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ready to evince their zeal and loyalty. The “*Prevot des Marchands*,” who is the first municipal magistrate, was in the interests of the Crown. The Bastille awed one part of the capital, as the “*Hotel des Invalides*” did the other. Paris, taken in the toils of arbitrary power, might have been disarmed, and deprived of the means to excite future commotion. The imprudence, pusillanimity, and impatience of the Court, rendered these advantages of no avail, and precipitated the unfortunate Prince upon measures, which terminated in irremediable disgrace and ruin.

Mistaking, or neglecting the most obvious principles of policy and wise precaution, which dictated to commence the plan of operations by subjecting Paris, from whence alone, any danger was to be apprehended; the King was induced to dismiss Neckar, with expressions of indignation, which were accompanied by menaces and insult, on the part of his brother, the Count d’Artois. This step, which evinced a total change of resolutions, and which,
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from the popularity of the Minister, was likely to produce a violent fermentation in every order of men, was followed by others equally injudicious. The States General were driven into the "Salle des Etats," where they held their meetings, by detachments of the Guards; who surrounded them, and who waited only the orders of the Court, to proceed to greater extremities against the obnoxious representatives of the nation.

Had these manifestations of vigour been only sustained, by instantly attacking and entering Paris, it is not to be doubted, that, unprepared as it still was, and unwilling to expose to the licence of an incensed soldiery, the lives and properties of its citizens, the capital would have been without difficulty reduced to obedience. But, an ill-timed and fatal delay, equally injurious with the preceding precipitation, gave the inhabitants time to recover from their first emotions of surprize and apprehension. They saw the timidity and imbecility of the Government, who having founded the

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charge, dared not advance to the attack. They profited by this want of exertion; and passing from one extreme rapidly to another, they almost unanimously took up arms against their rulers and oppressors. Joined by the French Guards, who, from a long residence in the capital, had been peculiarly exposed to seduction, and who at this decisive moment abandoned their Sovereign, the Parisians broke through every obstacle, by which they had hitherto been restrained. The supplies of arms and ammunition, which had been provided for their subjugation, were turned against the Crown; and the “ Hotel des Invalides,” the great repository of military stores, after a faint resistance, surrendered.

The Prince de Lambesc, who alone, of all the officers commanding the Royal troops in the vicinity of Paris, attempted to carry into execution the plan for disarming the capital, was repulsed in a premature and injudicious attack, which he made at the head of his dragoons, near the entrance of the garden of the Thuilleries. Already the
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“ Prevot des Marchands,” Monsieur de Fleffelles, convicted of entertaining a correspondence with the Court, and detected in sending private intelligence to de Launay, Governor of the Bastile, had been seized by the people, and fallen the first victim to the general indignation. His head, borne on a lance, exhibited an alarming example of the danger, to which adherence to the Sovereign must expose, in a time of anarchy and insurrection.

The Bastile alone remained ; and while it continued in the power of the Crown, Paris could not be regarded as free, or even as secure from the severest chastisement. It was instantly invested by a mixed multitude, composed of citizens, and soldiers who had joined the popular banner. De Launay, who commanded in the castle, by an act of perfidy, unjustifiable under any circumstances, and which rendered his fate less regretted, rather accelerated, than delayed, the capture of this important fortress. He displayed a flag of truce, and demanded a parley ; but abusing the con-

dence which these signals inspired, he discharged a heavy fire, from the cannon and musquetry of the place upon the besiegers, and made a considerable carnage. Far from intimidating, he only augmented, by so treacherous a breach of faith, the rage of an incensed populace. They renewed their exertions with a valour raised to frenzy, and were crowned with success. The Bastile, that awful engine of despotism, whose name alone diffused terror, and which for many ages had been sacred to silence and despair, was entered by the victorious assailants. De Launay, seized and dragged to the "Place de Greve," was instantly dispatched, and his head carried in triumph, through the streets of Paris.

Few captives, either of inferior or of eminent rank, were found in the apartments of the Bastile. The Count de Lorges, at a very advanced period of life, discovered in one of the dungeons of the "Tour de la Bertaudiere," was liberated, and exhibited to the public curiosity in the "Palais Royal." His squalid appearance,
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his beard which descended to his waist, and above all, his imbecility, resulting probably from the effect of an imprisonment of thirty-two years, were objects highly calculated to operate upon the senses and passions, of every beholder. It is indeed impossible, however we may lament or condemn the ferocious spirit, which has characterized and disgraced the French revolution, not to participate in the exultation, which a capital and a country so highly illuminated, and so long oppressed, must have experienced, at the extinction of this detestable and justly dreaded prison of state. Nor does the rapidity with which it was captured, excite less admiration, when its powers of resistance are considered, and the speedy relief which might have been afforded to it, by the numerous bodies of regular forces, with which Paris was surrounded on every side.

With the Bastile, expired the royal authority and consideration. The despotism of the French Princes, which long
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prescription, submission, and military strength, seemed to render equally sacred and unaffailable : which neither the calamities of the close of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, the profligacy and enormities of the succeeding Regency, nor the state of degradation, into which the monarchy sunk under Louis the Fifteenth, had ever shaken : that power which appeared to derive its support, almost as much from the loyalty and veneration, as from the dread and terrors of the subject, fell prostrate in the dust, and never betrayed any symptom of returning life.

Paris, liberated from all restraint, or even wholesome police, appeared to riot in the intoxication of freedom ; and stained its acquisition, by scenes of violence and blood, unworthy the first capital in Europe. Every trace of obedience disappeared ; and even the promoters of the late insurrection, were not secure from the capricious fury of a frantic and savage populace, who filled the “ Place de Greve” with clamours, and frequently tore the victim
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whom their indignation had selected, from the hands of justice.

But, at Versailles, consternation and alarm filled the court, on the arrival of this extraordinary intelligence. Yielding at once to the united impulse, of his terrors and his natural inclinations, the King, without even preserving the forms of Majesty however fallen, repaired to the National Assembly, rather as a suppliant than a monarch. Disordered in his dress, and unaccompanied by his guards or usual attendants, he betrayed his agitation, in the speech which he addressed to the States. Only two days preceding this melancholy exhibition of degraded dignity, he had replied to a remonstrance, which they presented to him, in terms of determination, mixed with menace. He now adopted the language of distress, invoked their assistance, disowned his intention to employ force for the subjection of the capital, assured them, that he had already sent orders to withdraw the troops, which had invested Paris and Versailles ; and professed his

his desire to give the most unequivocal proofs, of his deference to the wishes of his subjects. He concluded, by imploring them to make known these his paternal dispositions, to the inhabitants of the distracted metropolis.

The Assembly, which trembled a few hours before for its own safety, and had expected to be offered up as victims to the vengeance of an irritated Sovereign, replied with expressions of loyalty and affection, to these gracious declarations, although evidently extorted by fear. It was however, far otherwise at Paris, where the populace, deeming their triumph incomplete, while the King remained apparently tranquil in his palace; not only exacted his personal and immediate presence among them, to sanction their outrages on his authority; but accompanied this demand with menaces, if refused, of setting fire to Versailles, and at once extinguishing the obnoxious Princes of the House of Bourbon, in the flames. A monarch endowed with qualities such

as Louis the Fourteenth possessed, would perhaps, have refused compliance with this humiliating requisition; and while his army was yet entire, and the royal dignity not totally degraded, have embraced the generous resolution of meeting the storm, of trying the fortune of war, and at least devolving to his successor the prerogatives, which at his accession he had received and exercised. But Louis the Sixteenth possessed no abilities, competent to so magnanimous and unequal a struggle. He had already abandoned his attempts, to maintain the Royal power in its original vigour; and he had now scarcely any option between the loss of his throne, and a complete submission to the arbitrary pleasure of a populace, thirsting for blood, inflamed by success, and daily offering up victims to its revenge.

Under these melancholy circumstances, he did not hesitate to yield obedience to the mandate, which it was no longer safe to refuse. After such a night, as Charles

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the First may be supposed to have passed, previous to his ascending the scaffold : but unattended with that serenity and fortitude, which eminently distinguished the English Monarch, in the last act of life, he set out for Paris. Conscious however, of the peril, attendant on his appearance in the metropolis of his dominions, and doubtful of escaping from the rage of the multitude, to whom he was to be presented, he prepared for death, as at least, a possible event. He received the sacrament, made some private dispositions of his affairs, and gave various orders in consequence. Though desirous to see and embrace his son and daughter before his departure, he yet had firmness sufficient to refuse himself this indulgence, as fearing that it might too deeply affect, and disqualify him, for the part which he was to perform. “ J'en aurai plus de plaisir,” said he, “ si je reviens.” A gentleman who was near his person on this occasion, encouraging him, and venturing to answer
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for his safety, the King replied, “ Henry Quatre valoit mieux que moi ; et cependant on l’a assassiné.”

Though he quitted Versailles at an early hour, it was late before he entered Paris, from the delay occasioned by the immense multitudes, who assembled to see him pass, and who testified no sentiments of loyalty in their acclamations. When arrived at the “ Place de Greve,” and conducted to the “ Hotel de Ville,” the new Mayor, Monsieur Bailli, who had been elected to supply the late unfortunate first magistrate, insulted the fallen Prince, by a mock surrender of the keys of his capital ; which he accompanied with a sarcastic and insolent reflection, on the different situation in which Henry the Fourth stood, when he received a similar testimony of its submission and allegiance. The cries of the people, who insisted that the King should shew himself on the balcony, compelled him to give this last proof of his deference to their wishes ; and to add to the condescension, he accepted from the hands of

the Mayor, the National cockade, which he first carried to his lips, and then placed in his hat. After having been detained and exhibited as a captive to his own subjects, during the greater part of the day, without sustenance or refreshment of any kind, he was at length permitted to return to Versailles, and to conceal his emotions, in the privacy of his own apartments.

While this humiliating scene was acting before the eyes of all France, which were turned towards so unusual and attractive a sight, the adherents to the late measures, terrified at the menaces thrown out against them, and dreading the most fatal consequences of popular fury, profited of the King's absence and visit to his capital, to effect their own escape.

The Count d'Artois, regarding himself as peculiarly marked out for proscription and impeachment, and apprehensive that even his proximity of blood to the Sovereign, might prove an insufficient protection to his life, fled among the first, carrying with him his sons, the Dukes d'Angoulême

gouleme and de Berri ; two youths, who were successively presumptive heirs to the Crown, in case of the demise of the Dauphin. In the hurry of a precipitate retreat, it was found extremely difficult to furnish a few hundred louis d'ors to a Prince, for whose expensive gratifications, only some days before, the treasures of the monarchy were insufficient. He took the road to Flanders ; and was already far advanced towards the frontiers, before his departure was known or suspected at Paris.

When so distinguished a personage, and one so nearly allied to the throne, deemed himself no longer safe, even in the Royal residence, it cannot excite wonder that those of a less elevated condition, and who were equally obnoxious to an enraged populace, should consult their safety by instant flight. The principal roads were covered with illustrious fugitives, under every possible disguise and concealment. The Prince of Condé quitted Chantilly, followed by his son and grandson, the Dukes of Bourbon and Enghien. The Prince of Conti, the
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last in succession of the Blood Royal, after undergoing many extremities of hunger and fatigue, arrived at Luxembourg; to which place likewise, the Marechal de Broglio, abandoning his army, repaired without delay.

The Duchess of Polignac, so long unrival'd in the affections of the Queen, and round whom all the pleasures of the Court of Versailles were used to assemble; tearing herself from this scene of dissipation, attain'd with difficulty the city of Bale in Switzerland; after having encountered numerous dangers, and been preserved from the last degree of violence, as she passed through Sens, by the happy presence of mind, which distinguished an Abbé, by whom she was accompanied. At Bale, by one of those singular accidents, which evince the power of fortune, she found in the inn at which she alighted, the late Minister, Neckar; who having passed through Swabia, after his dismissal, on his way to Geneva, here first received from his enemies, the
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intelligence of the revolution. The Baron de Breteuil, pursued by the most marked detestation of his countrymen, evaded, as well as the Prince de Lambesc, the snares prepared to intercept them: the former reaching Bern in safety, as the latter did Turin. Monsieur de Besenval, less fortunate, was seized at Brie Comte Robert; and even the solicitations of Neckar himself, who endeavoured to interpose in his behalf, were insufficient to obtain his enlargement.

In this general consternation, the Queen, abandoned by all her dearest connexions, remained with her two children, friendless, and almost alone in the palace of Versailles. No Prince of the Royal Family ventured to abide the storm, except the Count de Provence; who, during the continuance of all these disorders, had enjoyed a distinguished share, at least of negative approbation; and whose conduct, throughout the critical circumstances which preceded the sedition of Paris, had been such

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as to conciliate, in some degree, the popular favour.

The Duke of Orleans, to whose intrigues, or opposition to the Crown, may be greatly ascribed the rapid progress of the general discontent, and the excesses of the people; viewed from the “ Palais Royal” with secret pleasure, the effects of his machinations, and enjoyed his triumph over the vanquished court. The military command of the National troops, and of the capital, were conferred by almost unanimous delegation, on the Marquis de la Fayette; as the supreme civil and municipal jurisdiction, devolved on Bailli, Mayor of Paris. The union of both these powers, was however frequently found unequal, to imposing proper restraints upon the ungoverned passions, and savage violence of a populace, new to freedom, and who stained its acquisition, by daily acts of vengeance and cruelty, The heads of Foulon and Berthier, one of whom had occupied a high situation in the
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late ministry, and the other had been Intendant of Paris, were carried through the streets; and the circumstances, with which the death of these eminent persons were accompanied, are only to be compared in horror and atrocity, with those attendant on the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the assassination of the Marechal d'Ancre, under Louis the Thirteenth.

Meanwhile, at the instigation and request of the National Assembly, Neckar was recalled, and invited by letters of the most flattering, and even penitential tenor, from the King himself, to resume the superintendence of the finances. He yielded, though with apparent reluctance, to these entreaties; and repaired to Court, loaded with expressions of general attachment and veneration, in every place through which he passed: while the credulous and deluded multitude expected from his presence, a speedy redress of all their grievances, the revival of public credit, and a remedy to the scarcity of grain, which had excited the clamours of the capital and

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the kingdom. To the admiration and astonishment of mankind, in an absolute monarchy, so strongly cemented as that of France appeared to have been, and in which loyalty was antiently esteemed to be characteristic of every class of citizens, no efforts were made to support the Royal power. An enthusiastic passion for liberty, pervaded all the provinces; and the revolution, commenced on the banks of the Seine, spread with equal rapidity and unanimity, to the foot of the Alps and Pyrenees; to the Rhine, and the Mediterranean.

No permanent calm succeeded to this storm of popular indignation. Elated with the possession of freedom, and exercising in many instances, a tyranny more oppressive and severe, than that from which they had just escaped, the people meditated new and greater invasions on the dignity, as well as on the prerogatives of the Crown. The press, freed even from that wholesome and necessary restriction, which Governments the most relaxed, impose upon the publication of opinions; compensated for the fetters

ters which it had so long worn, by giving birth to every species of licentious production, and insolent attack upon persons of the highest rank. The Queen was peculiarly the object of these libellous invectives; and every accusation private or political, which malignity could invent, to alienate the affections, and irritate the passions of mankind against her, was circulated, and publicly exposed to sale.

Although all the pomp and majesty, which in better times had surrounded and concealed the Sovereign, was now entirely withdrawn: though only guarded by the burgeses of Versailles, and destitute of any military protection against insult and outrage, Louis the Sixteenth stood exposed to every enterprize, which a mutinous capital might undertake or execute; yet some vestiges of personal liberty, he still retained. He was free to enjoy the diversion of the chace; and the National Assembly, convoked at Versailles, continued to hold its meetings there, under his immediate superintendence and inspection. It was even thought decent and necessary, on the part

of the new tribunes of the people, to march some regiments, in the month of September, on whose adherence they conceived that they could safely rely, to perform the ordinary functions of state ; at the same time that they prevented any escape, if such was intended by the King.

But, where so many inflammable materials were collected, it was not possible that any considerable time could elapse, before they burst into a conflagration. After one or two attempts, which the vigilance and activity of La Fayette, prevented from being carried into full execution, the populace of Paris, excited by various arts, and incensed at the Queen for having brought the Dauphin, and presented him to the officers of the regular officers after a public entertainment, rose as by universal consent, and determined to march to Versailles. By what motives, or with what intentions, the conductors of this armed mob were actuated, it is perhaps impossible at present, positively to assert. The deepest and blackest designs have, by popular malignity, been attributed to the

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Duke of Orleans ; no less, than the attainment of the Regency, at whatever price, and by every mode, however treasonable or flagitious. Many of the circumstances which distinguished that extraordinary scene, unquestionably evince a plan, not more artful than nefarious ; and which seemed calculated, by operating on the fears of the Sovereign, to induce him to abandon the throne, and seek his safety in flight ; while the Queen, who was more an object of national obloquy and aversion, might be instantly offered up as a victim to the frantic multitude.

It is difficult to do justice to the horrors of a night, similar only to those which are furnished by the annals of Charles the Ninth, and which reminds us of the times of Catherine of Medicis. Posterity will scarcely credit, that at the conclusion of the eighteenth century, and in a country eminently distinguished by all the softer virtues of humanity, acts of blood and ferocity, more savage than the Janizaries of Constantinople usually exercise
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against their despots, were performed with impunity. The singularity and incredibility of the recital will be augmented by recollecting, that many of the most violent among these ruffians, were women ; or, at least, habited in a female dress. Armed with every destructive weapon, they assaulted the guards who were stationed at the door of the Queen's apartments, burst into them, murdered those who opposed their progress, and penetrated to the chamber in which she slept. The efforts which were made to retard their fury, and the cries of " Sauvez la Reine," which echoed through the palace, gave her an instant in which to escape. The first Queen in Europe, was saved from a death the most ignominious, by the interval of almost a single moment. Undressed, and nearly naked, she gained a private staircase, which conveyed her to the King, who received her in his arms, where she fell senseless with terror. The materials of the bed from which she had just risen, after undergoing the strictest search, in hopes of discovering the unhappy object of their pursuit,

suit, were scattered over the room, as some gratification to their disappointed vengeance.

Louis the Sixteenth himself, appearing on the balcony of his apartment, in the language and attitude of supplication, vainly implored the populace to spare his guards, whom he saw massacred at his feet, without the power of extending to them any relief. He as vainly besought the Queen, to yield to the necessity of the time, and to retire to Rambouillet, where her person would at least be secure. Exerting a courage superior to her sex, and elevated above a sense of the danger, to which she was so conspicuously exposed, she firmly persisted in her refusal to fly; and declared her determination to accompany the King, and at least to expire, as she had lived, a Queen of France. Yet, conscious of the probability of her falling a sacrifice to the popular rage, she armed herself with a poinard, as a last resource against the degradation of plebeian violence and brutality.

It is impossible, how much soever we
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may condemn certain parts of her conduct and character, not to admire the heroism and magnanimity of this deportment, in which we seem to recognize the blood of so many Emperors, from whom she descended. The weakness of the woman, was notwithstanding, mingled with the fortitude of the Sovereign; and when she entered the coach, which was to convey herself and the captive King from Versailles to Paris, terrified at the cries of a furious multitude, who seemed to demand her forfeit life, she threw herself into the arms of La Fayette, who offered her his hand at the door of the carriage; and whose protection she invoked, to preserve her from outrage and death. Placing the Dauphin in her lap, and seated by her husband, the cavalcade moved slowly towards the capital; while the heads of murdered "Gardes du Corps," borne on poles, and held up to her view, presented a melancholy prospect of her own probable destiny. They at length reached the palace of the Thuilleries, thus accompanied, and took possession of
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that part of it, destined for their reception and residence: while cannon, mounted at the principal avenues, under pretence of safety and defence, secured them from rescue, and rendered escape impracticable.

Perhaps no day, so ignominious to the Royal dignity had been beheld, since the elevation of the Capetain Princes to the throne of France. The capture and imprisonment of Louis the Ninth, at Damietta, of King John, at Poitiers, and of Francis the First, at the battle of Pavia, however unfortunate and humiliating, yet were at least softened by many considerations. Those Monarchs were all taken in arms, after exerting the most heroic acts of valour against their conquerors, and owed their misfortunes only to the chance of war. Even Henry the Third, when he fled from his capital, pursued by the Guises, yet retained his personal independence, and soon returned to besiege, and to chastise his rebellious subjects. Louis the Sixteenth, sunk below esteem or commiseration, and not having exerted either abi-

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lity or courage, in the defence of his invaded prerogatives, only held a precarious life, at the mercy of a seditious and insolent populace, who having already imprisoned, might in any moment of resentment, terminate the reign of their fallen and degraded King. The palace in which he was confined, having been in a great measure neglected for more than a century, during which time Paris had rarely seen any Sovereign resident in the metropolis, was totally unfit for the reception of a Court; and even the apartments which were occupied by the King himself, were in so ruinous or decayed a condition, as not altogether to exclude the inclemency of the weather. To this situation was a Monarch reduced, who only a few months before, might be regarded as at the summit of human greatness; and the foundations of whose throne, strengthened by long possession, and by habits of obedience, seemed to bid defiance to all the ordinary convulsions, which overturn empires, and destroy the firmest fabrics of human power and wisdom.

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While these scenes of outrage and violence were exhibiting in France, it is difficult to imagine a picture of more complete serenity, than England presented; and this internal repose, was accompanied with every circumstance of external prosperity, and augmenting national consideration. The year, which immediately succeeded the malady of George the Third, may be ranked among the happiest of his reign, whether it be considered as personally affecting himself, or as productive of felicity to his people. The recent danger from which he had escaped, rendered his health and safety peculiarly precious to his subjects; as the animated expressions of their attachment and loyalty, must have deeply touched the heart of a Prince, infinitely sensible to these genuine marks of affection.

The character of the Sovereign, was not more formed to produce, than that of his Administration was to perpetuate, the general tranquillity. The conduct of Mr. Pitt, during the whole progress of the late commotions in France, may be held up

as a model of political honor and rectitude; perhaps, equally so of wisdom. Unlike to Richlieu, who fomented the causes of discord, between Charles the First and his Parliament: unlike to Vergennes, who stimulated the Americans to resistance; and after a series of indirect and insidious arts, violated the most solemn treaties, in order to assure their final independence: the English Minister steadily and systematically adhered to the most exact neutrality. The native elevation of his mind, and the magnanimity, which has ever characterised his measures, rendered him incapable of descending to the little artifices of crooked and vulgar statesmen. The probity of his private life, pervaded and marked his public line of action; nor did so uncommon and dignified a mode of proceeding, under circumstances which might seem to justify and authorize a more relaxed conduct, fail to produce its full effect on the two nations, who were peculiarly affected by it, as well as on the other states of Europe. Some approbation, if not admiration, is indeed due

due to a Government, who have been able to unite vigour, energy, and protection, with the most religious adherence to the national faith, and to every principle of sound and generous policy.

The period, which is comprised between the months of May 1789 and 1790, like the reign of Antoninus Pius, affords few materials for history, drawn from the interior events of the time. England, at peace with all the world, in the bosom of repose, saw her commerce and manufactures expand, her credit augment, and her name excite respect among the most distant nations; while many of the great surrounding European kingdoms, were either involved in foreign war, or desolated by domestic troubles. This tranquillity was not however allied to an ignominious and enervate sloth; but, on the contrary, was secured by vigilance, activity, and exertion. In conjunction with Prussia and Holland, Great Britain indirectly extended her attention and succour to Gustavus the Third, sinking under an unequal contest with the vast empire of Russia.

Russia. She restrained and arrested Denmark, even after that power, as an auxiliary of the Court of Petersburg, had already taken up arms, and committed hostilities against Sweden. She signified to Leopold, who had recently succeeded to the thrones of Hungary and Bohemia, her desire that he would recall his troops, from the Banks of the Danube; and she sustained by her negotiations, the firmness of the Ottoman counsels, while she silently, but not less decidedly, imposed limits on the ambition of their great enemy Catherine the Second, by prohibiting her fleet from presuming to quit the Baltic, and to complete the destruction of the Turks in the Archipelago.

In this exalted situation, to which perhaps no parallel in our annals can be adduced, since the termination of the short, but splendid protectorate of Cromwell, a storm unexpectedly and suddenly arose, from a quarter, where it would seem, that no foresight or precautions could have anticipated the danger. Among the new and unexplored paths of commerce, which the
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spirit of a discerning and adventurous people, had attempted to open since the peace of 1783, were particularly two, which appeared to promise the most beneficial returns. The first was a whale fishery, similar to that which had been carried on for ages, near the coasts of Greenland; but transferred to the Southern hemisphere, near the extremity of Patagonia, and in the stormy seas which surround Cape Horn; as well as in the Pacific Ocean. In the course of a few years, this branch of trade had augmented rapidly, and was found on trial, to afford very important advantages; nor had it received any impediment, from the vague pretensions of the Spanish Crown, to the sovereignty of the shores washed by that ocean, which was the scene of their exertions.

The second of these enterprizes, original in its own nature, able in its conception, bold in its execution, and having no precedent for its guidance, was directed to countries and to objects, almost as much unknown to geographical, as to commercial knowledge

knowledge or experience. It demanded many qualities, rarely and difficultly combined : a considerable capital ; ministerial approbation ; faithful and capable conductors ; dextrous navigators ; and above all, much time and perseverance, to ripen, and ultimately recompense the persons, engaging in so eccentric and expensive an expedition. This extraordinary union of talents and circumstances was, however, found in men of no superior description, among the mercantile inhabitants of London ; and it will remain a striking monument to future ages, of the energy, capacity, and nautical ability, which distinguish the present century and the British nation, above the most enlightened periods of any antient or modern people.

The North West coast of America, the part of the earth to which this embarkation was destined, was not only so remote, but so undefined, if I may be allowed the expression, that its very existence remained unknown or doubtful, before the discoveries of the reign of George the Third.

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At the commencement of the present century, it was thought to be almost as much beyond the ordinary bounds of navigation, as the islands of the Hesperides appeared to the Greeks ; and Swift himself, only eighty years ago, when he composed the entertaining voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, esteeming it the proper region of fable and romance, selected it for the position of his imaginary Brobdignag. The immense tract of land, extending northward from California and New Albion to the Frozen Sea, had, indeed, in a more recent period, been partly explored, and faintly traced by Cook ; though much remained, for future enterprize and industry to accomplish, before this discovery could be converted to any purpose of public utility. He had, however, ascertained the existence of the continent ; and he had received from the barbarous natives, with whom he established a species of barter, some valuable specimens of furs, in exchange for European commodities of a far inferior nature.

The hope of procuring a considerable number of these rare and costly skins, for the sale of which, a very advantageous market presented itself at Canton in China, was the leading inducement to the adventurers, who engaged in the expedition. But, in the pursuit of private emolument, objects of general and national consequence, were necessarily implicated and interwoven. Behind this coast, to the eastward, lay the vast continent of America; opening a field to commercial activity and research, in which the imagination itself was lost. The discovery of a communication through this unexplored country, and which may ultimately connect it, to a certain degree, with our settlements in Hudson's Bay, appears from their account, not to be totally visionary, though it was regarded as such, by Cook himself.

Conceptions and enterprizes, more calculated to enlarge the sphere of industry; to connect the most remote parts of the planet of the earth, by the bands of amity and commerce; to extend the limits
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of the human mind ; and to immortalize, while they enriched the nation which originated them, have perhaps scarcely ever been imagined or executed. They were not inferior to the most sublime and daring expeditions of antient Greece, and seemed to partake of the spirit of Columbus : though the present age, familiarized to naval skill and enterprize, no longer sees with the same admiration, or confers the same eulogiums on modern candidates for fame ; who are seldom regarded through any other medium, than that of utility, or pecuniary advantage.

Animated by these views, and having received the most affirmative marks of the protection of Government previous to their departure, five ships were fitted out from London, in 1785, and the two succeeding years. Four of these vessels, after doubling Cape Horn, arrived safely on the North West coast of America. The sanguine expectations which had been entertained, of effecting a lucrative

exchange of commodities with the natives, were fully and speedily realized. Cargoes of the finest furs were procured, and sold to the Chinese, even under great commercial discouragements and pecuniary impositions, at so high a price, as amply to reimburse and enrich the adventurers. Other attempts, of a similar nature, were made from Bengal; and two vessels were successively dispatched from the Ganges, to the same coast, in the year 1786. A factory was established at Nootka Sound, a port situated in the fiftieth degree of northern latitude, on the shore of America. Possession of it was solemnly taken, in the name of the Sovereign and Crown of England: amicable treaties were concluded with the chiefs of the neighbouring districts; and a tract of land was purchased from one of them, on which the new proprietors proceeded to form a settlement, and to construct storehouses. Every thing bore the appearance of a rising colony, and each year opened new sources of commerce and advantage.

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Although individuals, occupied in exertions of this private nature, could not be expected to extend their views or efforts, to objects of public utility, yet some further information was collaterally and incidentally acquired, respecting the continent of America, in the course of their voyages. It is even pretended, that a sloop, named the “Washington,” navigated for some hundred miles, along a vast number of islands, scattered in a sea, which intersects that continent in a north-east direction: and though the accounts hitherto received or transmitted, of this extraordinary and interesting fact, are not either so minute, or so accurate, as by any means to entitle them to be implicitly received, yet they appear to be not totally destitute of foundation and probability. Every prospect, either of national advantage, or of private emolument, which the commerce of these coasts seemed to promise to Great Britain, was, however, destined to experience a sudden and unexpected suspension.

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On the 6th of May, 1789, two Spanish ships of war entered Nootka Sound ; the commanding officer of which, after making every profession of amity during several days, seized on the English vessels, in the name of his Sovereign, as they successively arrived from various parts of the coast, imprisoned the crews, confiscated or plundered the cargoes, and ultimately carried them as lawful prizes, to St. Blas, in Mexico. Violations so unprovoked, not only of the peace subsisting between the two Monarchies, but of all the laws established between civilized nations, were accompanied and aggravated by every circumstance of duplicity, insolence, and cruelty ; while they were contrasted with the most friendly assistance and attentions, shewn to the captains of two American ships, the “ Washington ” and the “ Columbia,” who had been brought by the same commercial inducements, to the port of Nootka. These testimonies of protection and regard, were even carried so far by the Spaniards, as to compel the crew of one of the captured English

English vessels, to assist in navigating the “Columbia” to Canton; through which channel, the first regular and authentic account of these acts of hostility, was officially transmitted to the English Administration, though they had been preceded, by some vague and indistinct intimations of the same nature, made by the Spanish ambassador at the Court of London.

The conduct of the First Minister on receiving this intelligence, evinced no less the magnanimity, than the decision of his character. Without descending to the tedious and humiliating forms of request with the Court of Spain, which might elude and protract, if not ultimately refuse, according to its usual policy, any reparation for these outrages; he, in the first instance, by a message from the King, informed the two Houses of Parliament, of the whole series of transactions. He clearly evinced the nullity and injustice of any general pretensions, on the part of the Spanish Crown, to a territory, discovered, planted, and occupied by the English; but in particular, to
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the Port of Nootka, situated at a distance from any known settlement, belonging to that nation. He professed his anxious desire, to terminate by amicable explanation and treaty, the present cause of dispute. He at the same time declared his determined intention, not only to exact from the Court of Madrid, an adequate satisfaction and compensation for the injuries recently sustained ; but to compel Spain to renounce decidedly and formally, any indefinite claim which she might have set up, either to the exclusive navigation of the Pacific ocean, or to the sovereignty of the whole North West coast of America. He called on the loyalty, dignity, and honour of the House of Commons for support, in maintaining these invaded rights by force of arms, if Spain should be insensible to the language of reason.

The approbation which so manly an appeal to the nation excited, was general and animated. The leaders of Opposition joined in that sentiment, and expressed their conviction of the wisdom, as well as

neceſſity, of ſuſtaining by every military and naval exertion, the effect of negotiation. The celerity with which theſe reſolutions were followed, in the equipment of a powerful armament, was calculated to augment the high reputation of the Miniſtry throughout Europe, while it called into action all the reſources of the kingdom. A diſſolution of Parliament, unqueſtionably judicious under the circumſtance of a probably impending war, followed theſe demonſtrations of reſentment, and demands of reparation.

If we compare the energy and deciſion of ſo vigorous a line of conduct, with that which was adopted by Sir Robert Walpole or Lord North, in ſimilar ſituations, the conſtrast muſt be highly flattering to the preſent Adminiſtration. The ſluggiſh and reluctant diſinclination of the former, to perceive or to reſent the depredations, committed by the Spaniards upon the Engliſh trade, during a long ſeries of years; while it emboldened the

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enemy, depressed the genius of England: until Parliament, roused by such a continuation of insults and indignities, at length vindicated the national honour, and drove the Minister from the superintendence of affairs.

The temporising and pusillanimous counsels of Lord North, in the dispute respecting the Falkland Islands; and the ultimate termination of it, which left the right undecided, and even asserted by the Court of Madrid, at the same moment that from motives of political convenience, Spain thought proper to cede the contested territory to England: these humiliating measures, exposed and reprobated by the pen of Junius, stand in need of no comment, and are sufficiently appreciated by a just and discerning people.

Spain was no longer governed by Charles the Third, at the time when these interesting events took place. That Prince, after a reign of above twenty years as Sovereign of Naples, had ascended the

the Spanish throne, on the death of his brother Ferdinand the Sixth, in 1759; and expired, at a very advanced period of life, in December, 1788. His unconcealed dislike of the English nation, from whom in his youth he had received some signal benefits, as well as some painful and personal humiliations, had probably induced him, even more than the ties of blood, or connexions of policy with the Court of France, to join that kingdom in two successive wars, which she carried on against Great Britain.

To the counsels of his reign, and probably to a systematic plan, in concert with the Cabinet of Versailles, for attacking the commerce, and setting limits to the enterprizes of England on the North West coast of America, we may without injustice attribute the acts of violence, committed by Don Martinez in the Port of Nootka. The short period, comprising scarcely five months, which elapsed between the death of Charles the Third, and those infractions of the peace, previously subsisting between

the two Crowns, leave no room to doubt, that the original orders were issued during the life of the late Sovereign.

Charles the Fourth succeeded to the Spanish monarchy under these circumstances. Though of a mature age, his character was little known or understood, beyond the limits of his own dominions. In the early part of his life, he had appeared to evince sentiments more Castilian, than any of the descendants of Philip the Fifth had hitherto discovered; and to promise a reign, in which the feelings of a common origin and descent, would influence less on affairs of state, than a wise consideration of the true policy and interests, becoming a genuine King of Spain. It may however be questioned, whether this anticipation of his maxims and supposed line of conduct, will be confirmed by experience; and whether he will emancipate himself from the partialities, naturally connected with his near affinity to Louis the Sixteenth. The same Ministers seem to govern, and the same principles to ani-

mate, the Court of Madrid, which have uniformly characterized it, since the extinction of the Spanish branch of the House of Austria : and the time is probably still distant, when the pernicious effects of the treaty of Utrecht, in uniting two monarchies, which for ages anterior to that event had never acted in conjunction against Great Britain, will have finally ceased to operate.

Meanwhile, the efforts of the First Minister to terminate the present dispute by negotiation, kept equal pace with the exertions, made to equip a formidable naval force. At the same time that a fleet, the command of which was destined to Lord Howe, assembled at Portsmouth, Mr. Fitzherbert was dispatched as ambassador to Madrid, in order to try the effect of remonstrance and expostulation. The English people, unanimous in their approbation of the measures pursued, and in their demand of reparation for the injuries sustained, loudly called for instant war, or for the most unequivocal and satisfactory concessions.

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The convulsions, and embarrassed state of the French monarchy, together with the personal situation of the King of France, appeared to render an adherence to, or completion of the family compact impracticable, however well inclined the Court of Versailles might be supposed, to assist and support her ally.

Spain doubtless felt and regretted this incapacity, which compelled her to commence a war against England, unassisted by any European power; and the event of which, in the present circumstances might be fatal to her grandeur or commerce in every part of the world. She seemed to yield to these obvious considerations; and the Spanish Ministry, towards the close of July, agreed to make a compensation for the losses, sustained by the English adventurers plundered at Nootka, as a basis or preliminary to a final and amicable arrangement. Notwithstanding, however, this apparent desire of adjusting the points in dispute, and of avoiding the ultimate appeal to the sword, every exertion was not only made
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in the ports of Cadiz and Ferrol, to fit out a numerous squadron ; but the Spanish ambassador at the Court of France, expended the treasures of his master, in endeavours to induce the National Assembly, to adopt the quarrels of Charles the Fourth, and to fulfil in its whole extent, the obligations of the family compact.

His labours, though not equally successful, as, under more propitious circumstances, they might have proved, yet produced a vote, favourable to the views and wishes of the Crown of Spain. A general profession, on the part of the National Assembly, of adherence to the stipulations, formed between the two nations ; and a resolution instantly to arm a considerable naval force at Brest, were procured and published. The hopes of a speedy and permanent accommodation, between the Courts of London and Madrid, which the first concession on the part of the latter power had excited, gradually grew more uncertain and problematical. Autumn advanced, without any certainty or decision on this
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great point ; and though the fleet of England, which had cruized in the Bay of Biscay during near six weeks, returned again to Spithead, without having seen an enemy, yet the expectation of an eventual rupture, was rather augmented than diminished.

While these negotiations and armaments detained the West of Europe in suspense, the most important and unexpected events had taken place, among the Princes of the Germanic empire, in consequence of the death of the late Emperor, Joseph the Second. That restless and turbulent Prince, exhausted in body, and agitated in mind, expired at Vienna, in the commencement of the present year. His vast, but divided and revolted provinces, devolved to his brother Leopold, Great Duke of Tuscany. Few Sovereigns have ever acceded to a throne, under more critical and alarming circumstances. Though Laudohn had closed his brilliant career of military glory, and even shed a lustre over the last hours of Joseph, by the capture of Belgrade : though the Turks had been driven
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beyond the Danube, and the Imperial troops had at length penetrated into Servia and Moldavia ; yet these advantages, bought with three campaigns, and preceded by defeats and disasters, offered a very inadequate compensation for the calamities, which menaced or afflicted every other part of the dominions of the House of Austria. Hungary, so renowned for its enthusiastic loyalty and attachment to Maria Theresa, when that Princess was involved in the deepest distress, had been alienated by her successor ; who insulted their most sacred prejudices, while he invaded their most valuable immunities. Posterity will scarcely believe, that this injudicious and infatuated Prince, soon after his accession, from resentment to the Hungarians, not only removed the crown and regalia of that monarchy from Buda, the antient capital to Vienna : but, as a mark of scorn and contempt, caused these venerable insignia of the kingly dignity, inexpressibly precious in the estimation of the people, to be conveyed from one capital

tal to the other, in the common stage waggon.

The King of Prussia hung over Bohemia, with a prodigious army, ready to enter that kingdom. The German Princes were almost universally disaffected to the late Emperor, and had reprobated his insidious projects, for an exchange of territory with the Elector Palatine. The Netherlands, irritated by a long series of oppression, confiscation, and violation of all their ancient liberties, had renounced any allegiance to a Prince, whom they regarded not as a protector, but a tyrant. Philip the Second, when he recalled the sanguinary Duke of Alva, was scarcely more detested, and had not more completely lost the Low Countries, than Joseph the Second had done. Dalton, though at the head of a regular and formidable body of forces, had been compelled precipitately to evacuate Brussels, and to seek his safety in a disorderly and ignominious retreat. Luxembourg alone remained, of all the ten provinces, when Leopold succeeded

succeeded to his brother ; and Flanders no longer even listened to the propositions of accommodation, which Joseph in his dying moments, offered to his revolted subjects.

In this situation, surrounded with difficulties, occasioned by the ambition and despotism of his predecessor, the new King of Hungary, after some months of delay and irresolution, wisely yielded to the necessity, imposed on him by the distracted condition of his affairs. The Courts of Berlin and of London, acting in concert, and sustained by a Prussian army, gave law to the House of Austria. Leopold consented to abandon the alliance of the Empress of Russia ; to restore to Turkey the territories lately acquired ; and to receive his Flemish subjects into favour, after conceding and confirming, in the most extended degree, all their liberties and privileges. This vigorous and successful interposition, was instantly followed by a peremptory requisition, on the part of the same Powers, to Catherine the Second, by which that haughty and enterprising

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Princess was required to follow the example, exhibited by the King of Hungary; and to grant an equitable peace to the Ottoman Porte, as well as to conclude the war, which she carried on against Sweden.

From so humiliating a necessity, the Empress extricated herself by one of the most rapid, unforeseen, and perhaps masterly strokes of policy, which is to be found in the annals of the present century. She made a peace with that King of Sweden, against whom she had not scrupled, a few years since, to excite his own soldiers and subjects to revolt: who had scarcely escaped from captivity at Wybourg, by forcing a passage through the Russian fleet, with which he was surrounded: and who had not only committed hostilities, and waged war upon her empire; but was supposed to have drawn his pen against her reputation, and to have accused her to Europe, and to future times, as an usurper, insatiable in her thirst of power, and destitute of faith or honour. Only a few days intervened, between the most
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rancorous display of personal enmity, and the solemn exchange of the ratifications of peace : while Catherine, liberated by this successful exertion, from an enemy who detained her fleet in the Baltic, and who might present himself at the very gates of her capital, assumed new vigour, disdained to submit to the mandates of Prussia, and continued her military operations against the Turks.

She did not stop here ; but, irritated by the attempt to fetter her arms and limit her conquests, she pressed Gustavus the Third to enter into a confederacy against those powers, with whom he had been so lately in strict alliance ; and to whose timely interference or good offices, he had been in a great measure indebted for his preservation. She negotiated anew with the Prince Regent and Cabinet of Denmark, whom the interposition of England had hitherto reluctantly retained in neutrality. She corrupted, or persuaded the Polish Diet, to express sentiments hostile to Prussia ; and encouraged Spain to refuse
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compliance with the demands of the British Government.

Under these circumstances and appearances, hostile or inauspicious to the repose of Europe, the month of October commenced. During its progress, the hopes and fears of the nation were painfully suspended, by the uncertainty of the final event. The impatience and anxiety, natural to, and inseparable from such a situation, were infinitely augmented by the secrecy and silence, which surrounded and concealed the operations of the cabinet. The powers and energies of Government, concentrated round the First Minister, and vested in his person, exhibited to the English nation, all the vigor, celerity, and decision of a despotism, unaccompanied with its characteristic and concomitant evils. Though the finest and most numerous fleet, which Great Britain had ever equipped, lay at Spithead, ready to stand out into the Atlantic upon the shortest notice : though Admiral Cornish, at the head of eight ships of the line, had already set sail ;
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and, favored by an easterly wind, was clear of the Channel: though a detachment of the Guards, to the number of above two thousand men, were under orders to march to Portsmouth; and every preparation was made to facilitate their prompt embarkation: though the blow which impended over the Spanish monarchy, hung by a single thread, and might every instant fall; yet, not a whisper transpired, to gratify the curiosity of an eager capital, and an expecting country.

Universal ignorance, or fanciful conjecture prevailed, respecting the destination of these powerful naval and military armaments; while the magnitude and scattered position of the Spanish dominions, from the mouth of the Mississippi, to that of the river Plate, left an ample field for the imagination, and afforded scope for unbounded assertion. To those who recollected the delays, the publicity, and the timidity, which degraded the counsels, and frustrated the measures or exertions

tions of England, during the Administration which conducted the American war, the present contrast was matter of equal wonder and admiration. The nation, conscious that its honour and its interests were committed to a Minister of transcendent integrity and firmness, patiently waited the winding-up of the catastrophe, with eyes fixed on its conductor. Opinion fluctuated rapidly and capriciously from war to peace, as the most trifling events appeared to indicate the one or the other; and October expired as it had begun, in uncertainty and suspense.

During the three first days of the succeeding month, as every hour might be supposed to decide on this momentous question, expectation seemed to have attained its highest point; while the rapid approach of that period, when Parliament was summoned to meet for the dispatch of public business, and the advanced season of the year, added to the length of time which had already elapsed, since
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the commencement of the negotiation, appeared to preclude the possibility of any farther delay. It was not till the fourth of November, a day already rendered memorable and auspicious in the annals of Great Britain, that the messenger so long expected, arrived with pacific intelligence. Spain, after a resistance, proportioned to the magnitude and importance of the objects contested, and after peremptory and reiterated refusals to concede upon points, equally affecting her pride and her interests; relaxed at once from this tone, complied with the demands of England, and signed a "Convention," which terminated every past or present cause of dispute, between the two Crowns.

To the wisdom and moderation of the Spanish First Minister, the Count de Florida Blanca, this timely and temperate resolution, which arrested the sword already unsheathed, was attributed, by an opinion, not only general, but unquestionably sustained on high authority and

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evidence. If the historian was permitted to speculate upon the events of futurity ; or if, from ascertained and existing facts or circumstances, we might be allowed to predict respecting those, which would have taken place ; it is more than merely probable, that Spain must have sustained very deep and lasting injury from that war, which was thus unexpectedly and suddenly averted.

The naval power of England, which at no period of past time, had ever been so expeditiously or vigorously called into action : the spirit and unanimity which prevailed throughout the kingdom : the acknowledged energy and capacity of the Administration : the very nature of the war in which we were ready to engage, which must have been not only offensive, but directed to parts of the globe, peculiarly calculated to inflame the ardor of the assailants, by prospects of wealth and plunder : the defenceless and unprotected state of many of the Spanish colonies, in both hemispheres : the anarchy, and consequent incapacity
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of France, to extend any prompt and effectual support to the Crown of Spain: even the less important, but distressful and perplexing embarrassments, resulting from the earthquake, which demolished the fortresses of Oran upon the coast of Africa, almost precisely at the same time, when the Emperor of Morocco commenced hostilities against the Catholic King: this combination of causes or events, in which there appears to be no exaggeration, may perhaps, without the imputation of national partiality, justify an opinion, that the Spanish monarchy was snatched, by the wise and yielding policy of its Minister, from evils and calamities of no common description.

While, however, I anticipate these advantages, which might probably have resulted from war, under the circumstances already enumerated; it is unquestionable, that to a country so deeply involved in debt, as England, no series of conquests, which the wildest imagination can suppose, had they even been realized, could

have compensated for the misfortunes inseparably connected with hostilities. Peace, even though only obtained upon the most moderate, and barely equitable terms, must, to every reflecting mind, have been far preferable to the acquisition of all the provinces, which Cortez ever conquered, or Pizarro subdued. But, the “ Convention,” recently signed, while on one hand it made ample reparation and restitution to the injured Crown, and plundered subjects of Great Britain; on the other, opened new and unexplored sources of wealth and commerce.

After having been submitted to the inspection and investigation of the people of England, during many weeks: after having received the most authentic attestations of public gratitude and satisfaction, in addresses to the throne, from the great corporate bodies of London, Edinburgh, and Bristol; necessarily composed of persons, highly sensible to, and highly enlightened upon, the commercial interests of the country: after having been finally dis-

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cuffed, with all the severity of political criticism, in the two Houses of Parliament, and attained the sanction of decided approbation in both: having undergone these rigorous disquisitions upon its merits, the “ Convention ” may be examined, like any other fact in the English annals, with the candour, impartiality, and temper of history.

That Great Britain has obtained by it points and objects, hitherto reserved or refused by the Court of Madrid, in every treaty since the termination of the reign of Philip the Fourth, is incontestible. Time alone can completely ascertain the value and intrinsic worth of these concessions, which are, in a great degree, dependant on the industry and enterprize exerted, in converting them to national advantage. That jealous and tenacious power, which originally discovered and conquered the New World, over which she has always endeavoured to draw the deepest veil, while she excluded every European state from any participation in her
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vast acquisitions ; has, for the first time, receded from her high and exclusive pretensions. The pretended donation of the See of Rome, and all the antiquated claims, which long prescription had rendered venerable, have been for ever relinquished and abandoned by the present Convention. The navigation of the Pacific Ocean, is, in effect, declared to be as free as that of the Atlantic. The right, claimed by England, of pursuing the fishery on those parts of the coast of South America, unoccupied and uncolonized by Spain, is not only avowed : but, a vast tract of the Magellanic regions, on either side of Cape Horn, comprizing the whole coast, below the most southern settlement already made by the Spaniards, is declared to be free to both countries, for every purpose of temporary accommodation ; while the two Crowns are equally interdicted and restrained, from forming future permanent establishments, on that inhospitable shore. In return for this liberal and ample concession, England submits to the equitable

ble demand, of not permitting her vessels to approach within ten leagues of the coasts and countries, actually occupied by Spain, upon the Pacific Ocean.

On the North West Coast of America, the original discovery, occupancy, and sovereignty of which, appear to furnish matter of infinite doubt and discussion, still greater advantages are secured by the Convention. Without recapitulating the primary ground of dispute, upon which clear and immediate satisfaction is stipulated: the whole continent, north of the settlements already possessed by Spain, is left open to both nations; with only a reciprocal right of entry, for purposes of trade, into the ports or places which either may occupy.

The same general and equal principle, is laid down as the basis of accommodation, in the southern and northern hemisphere, and forms the predominant feature of the treaty. It was not denied by the Minister, and it was justly asserted by his opponents, when the Convention was agitated in the House of Commons, that to
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render it perfect, and exempt from future possible misinterpretation, a precise limit should have been drawn, both on the coast of North and South America. But, the evils inseparable from a prolongation of the dispute, must have so greatly outweighed the benefit, to be derived from any line of demarcation which could have been instantly settled, that no possible censure can be affixed on that account; since its expediency was not more obvious, than its immediate execution was difficult or impracticable. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that where so clear a principle is by mutual consent established, no essential obstacle can arise, in the course of future negotiations between the two Courts, for the final settlement of their respective boundaries.

To complete this great act of public benefit and national glory, it only remained to meet the expence occasioned by it, with promptitude and alacrity. The Minister, so far from avoiding or protracting that necessary, but painful and arduous task, followed the Convention, with the immediate

diate production of the accounts, respecting the naval and military armaments, and the pecuniary impositions which he meant to propose, for their speedy liquidation. Not more distinguished, by the magnitude and energy of his preparations to humble the monarchy of Spain, when war appeared inevitable; than characterised by the most salutary and severe œconomy, when that necessity no longer existed; his enlarged and active mind overcame the difficulties, by which common statesmen are impeded. He proposed to raise, not merely the interest of the debt recently incurred; but to extinguish the principal itself, in the space of four years, though amounting to above three millions sterling. The effect of so judicious and provident a measure, which must equally evince the magnanimity of the Minister from whom it originated, and the resources of the country which adopted it, will be felt through every kingdom of Europe. It is not exceeded by any of the acts of wisdom, found in the annals of Eliza-

both, when the counsels of England were directed by the foresight and policy of a Burleigh. It is without precedent, since the beginning of the present century, and is calculated to excite the admiration and incredulity of future times.

The day, upon which Mr. Pitt submitted to Parliament a system, so calculated for general advantage, was distinguished by another act, which might have rendered illustrious a person less conspicuously eminent above his fellow citizens. The garter, which was conferred by the Sovereign upon Lord Chatham, evinced the indifference or superiority of the Minister, to the highest external decoration and distinction; as powerfully, as his renunciation of a lucrative office, in favour of Colonel Barré, at a much earlier period of his administration, had proved his disinterestedness and contempt of emolument.

As it seems hardly possible to have made greater sacrifices than these, it is perhaps difficult to select any example in modern times, of so early an acquisition of that
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glory, which is the just reward of rectitude and talents. Whether the names of Clarendon, of Godolphin, or of Pelham, can be placed in any degree of comparison or competition with that of Pitt, it may be left to posterity to determine. But it is competent to the historian of the present age, to assert and to prove, that at no period since the restoration of monarchy in the person of Charles the Second, has this country permanently attained to so high a point of solid greatness and importance, as she enjoys at the present moment. We should search in vain for any traces of national consideration or honor, in the profligate annals of that dissolute and dependent Prince, whom I have just named; or in the bigotted and transitory reign, of his less criminal, but more unfortunate successor. Shall we discover greater subject for pride and exultation, even under the temperate and elective government of William the Third?

Whatever obligations we may owe to the Prince of Orange, as our deliverer

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from civil and spiritual tyranny, his arms were constantly restrained by the Generals, as his measures were uniformly defeated by the policy and power, of Louis the Fourteenth. After a perpetual and unequal struggle, in which her commerce was almost annihilated, and in which the solitary laurels of the Boyne and of La Hogue, were contrasted with the annual defeats, received on the Continent, and in the Channel, Great Britain nearly sunk under the exertion. Though the peace of Ryfwick produced a short and delusive calm, yet the Crown of Spain, in violation of the most solemn renunciations, was quietly transferred, in the year 1700, on the extinction of the Spanish branch of the House of Austria, to a Prince of France: while the last hours of William were occupied by ineffectual efforts, to prevent the fatal consequences of an act, incontestably injurious to, or subversive of the security, interests, and greatness of England.

It must be admitted, that the female reign which succeeded, so long as it was conducted

conducted by the counfels of Godolphin, and the genius of Marlborough, presents a ftriking picture of military glory, and fucceffive triumphs. The Court of Versailles, accuftomed to confer, condefcended to folicit for Peace ; and Torcy, at Gertruydenburg, in 1709, exhibiting the humiliating fight of a Minifter of Louis the Fourteenth, prostrate before England and Holland. But the imprudence or prefumption of an Adminiftration, intoxicated with profperity, and unmindful of the changes of human affairs, allowed the moment to elapfe, in which the fafety and interefts of their country might have been for ever fecured, on the moft durable foundations. The horizon foon became darkened, and the profpect obfcured by clouds.

Villars refcued France from her ftate of danger and diftreff, while Oxford and Bolingbroke difgraced the government, and accelerated the death of their feeble miftrefs, by meafures of pufillanimity, and breaches of national faith. The trophies of Blenheim and of Malplaquet,
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were tarnished by the defeat of Denain, and obliterated by the peace of Utrecht: the House of Austria was betrayed in that dishonourable treaty; and the evening of a reign, so distinguished and so splendid, closed in weakness, and is only recollected with regret.

If the annals of the last Princess of the Stuart line, afford so little matter for historic praise, it is not in the labyrinth of Continental Politics and alliances, which characterised and composed those of George the First, that we can look for topics of eulogium, or subjects for admiration. The naval victory, obtained by Byng in 1718, over the Spanish fleet in the Faro of Messina, however brilliant and decisive; so far from being productive of any advantage to the nation, counteracted every principle of wise and judicious policy. It stands contrasted with the fatal bankruptcy of the South Sea year; with the melancholy sacrifice of Hosier's devoted squadron, under the walls of Porto Bello; with a dereliction of the in-
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terests and honour of the Crown of England, rendered subservient to injurious predilections, and foreign acquisitions.

The commencement of the reign of George the Second, conducted, as the greater part of that of his father had been, by the counsels of Walpole, discloses scarcely a more exhilarating prospect. It was, indeed, pacific: but this peace was the ignominious and supine insecurity of James; not the dignified and martial tranquillity of Elizabeth. I am at a loss to find, in the present century, any portion of time less distinguished by wisdom and vigor; or during which, Great Britain was fallen into more complete insignificance, than in that interval, which elapsed from the death of George the First in 1727, to the close of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, in 1742. Though the subservient fleet of this country, escorted the younger son of Philip the Fifth, from Barcelona into Italy: though we facilitated and advanced the grandeur of the House of Bourbon: though we tamely submitted to the acts of violence, exercised by Spain
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against our commerce in all the American seas : though we abandoned the Emperor Charles the Sixth, in the war of 1734, to the united force of France, Spain, and Sardinia, who dismembered Naples and Sicily from the dominions of the House of Austria, in so unequal a contest : though, in order that the measure of incapacity and misconduct should be complete, we even permitted Louis the Fifteenth, by incorporating the Dutchy of Lorrain with his hereditary possessions, to cement and perfect the French greatness ; yet these mighty and numerous concessions did not conciliate affection, or procure respect. Versed in the arts of Parliamentary address, and the science of domestic venality, but conscious of his incapacity to conduct the vessel, through the storm which impended ; Walpole, when he had exhausted every endeavour, to detain his Sovereign and his country in disgraceful neutrality, reluctantly resigned the reigns of power, which he had held too long for the honour of his master, or for the glory and advantage of England.

Pelham,

Pelham, after a short interval succeeded. His Administration, though neither fortunate and successful in war, nor secure and undisturbed in peace, yet was rendered respectable, by the lustre of his private and personal virtues. The inglorious campaigns of Fontenoy, and of La Feldt : the defeats of the allied army in Flanders, followed by the capture of Bergen-op-Zoom, and the siege of Maestricht : the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, humiliating and injurious to Great Britain : the ravages, or hostilities, continued to be exercised by France, against our colonies in America and the East Indies, even subsequent to that treaty : these subjects of general complaint and dissatisfaction, which clouded the Ministry of Pelham, consoled the nation for his loss, when removed by death in 1754, from the superintendence of public affairs.

The short remainder of the reign of George the Second, was equally calamitous and disgraceful, 'till that memorable and brilliant, but transitory æra, preceding

its final termination, when the genius of Pitt renewed the glories and successes, so long forgotten. The loss of Minorca, and the ignominious convention of Closterseven, were erased by the successive conquests of Martinico, Canada, Plafsey, Belleisle, and the Havanna. But, the demise of the Sovereign, in 1760, and the transfer of ministerial authority which succeeded, prevented the beneficial consequences, naturally to have been expected from this chain of victories. A peace, which never can be sufficiently reprobated, and in which the ignorance of the interests of the nation, was only exceeded by the dereliction of the honor of the Crown, restored to the two branches of the House of Bourbon, those provinces and possessions, of which they had been deprived by the Earl of Chatham.

I shall not enumerate the fleeting phantoms of Administration, which annually appeared and vanished; nor attempt to describe that period, which elapsed from the resignation of Lord Bute, to the year 1770, when

when the reins of power were delegated to Lord North. There are certainly few events, included within that portion of time, which can induce us to lament that it was not of longer duration. With still greater reason, I wish to draw a veil across the series of errors, incapacity, and misconduct, which preceded and produced that fatal war, terminated by the emancipation of America, and which still blazed in every quarter of the globe, at the æra when these memoirs commence.

From the elevation on which we are placed, it affords a sort of melancholy pleasure, to look down upon the anarchy and calamity, which endear the present Government, by a comparison with that state from which we have escaped. The actual situation of this country, realizes the warmest wish of a Minister, or a Sovereign, to whom the prosperity and glory of England are supremely dear. That object, which William vainly sought to attain; which Godolphin and Marlborough allowed to escape; and which the Earl of Chatham was not permitted to accomplish;

has been reserved for the present age to behold. The monarchies of France and Spain have been successively humbled and restrained, without the necessity of having recourse to the sword. Great Britain, at the conclusion of 1790, is become by general consent, the acknowledged Arbiters of Europe; and to her possession of external consideration and respect, unites every internal source of wealth and felicity.

From the survey of so august and animating a scene, it is natural to turn our eyes towards the picture exhibited by France, at the present moment. The convulsions which have agitated that distracted country since the month of October 1789, though sometimes apparently suspended or extinguished, yet may possibly revive with augmented violence. The last fourteen months seem to have been alternately distinguished, by acts of festivity and of slaughter; by the pageant of a Fœderation, in the “Champ de Mars” at Paris, where the national freedom was solemnly recognized, by a captive and degraded Sovereign;

reign; and by the memorable carnage of Nancy, which so quickly followed. It is perhaps impossible for the wisest statesman, to predict the eventual consequence of these conflicting causes; or to hazard a decided opinion on the final result, as yet concealed in futurity, and obscured by so many contradictory appearances. The depression and humiliation of the clergy; the sale of the ecclesiastical property; the annihilation of the orders of nobility, which were almost coeval with the times of Clovis and of Pharamond; the abolition of the peerage; the renewal of the dangerous experiments of Law; and the creation of a paper currency, nearly as destitute of solid support, as was the system of that celebrated minister. These extraordinary operations, or measures of government, in a great degree without precedent in the history of modern European nations, have not yet sufficiently unfolded and developed their full effect, to enable the philosopher and the historian to confer on them his censure, or his admiration.

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It has not even hitherto been ascertained or exemplified, since the extinction of the Roman freedom by Marius and Sylla, that a people whose numbers exceed twenty millions, are capable of being permanently governed under a free constitution. Nor has mankind yet seen any instance of a capital, and a country, habituated for ages to despotism, sunk in pleasures, lost to public principle, destitute even of the forms of external respect for the national religion, and only intoxicated with the speculations of a distempered and visionary philosophy, which ever aspired or attained to a well-regulated and wisely-cemented Liberty.

It was not in such a state of morals or of society, that the Athenians broke the fetters of arbitrary power, when roused by Harmodius and Aristogiton. The elder Brutus bore no similarity either to Mirabeau, or to La Fayette. Rome vainly assassinated her Dictator, when public virtue was no longer to be found in the senate, or among the people. The Mountaineers of Switzerland, who threw off
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the yoke of the House of Austria; and the oppressed peasants of the Low Countries, who revolted from the tyranny of Philip the Second, were poor, hardy, and martial. The English Parliament, which opposed, and ultimately vanquished Charles the First, called upon a nation, which however inflamed by fanaticism, was unsubdued by luxury, and uncorrupted by venality. Times of effeminacy and refinement, have not hitherto been found to produce a plant, of so hardy and vigorous a nature, as Freedom; and if we are destined to see in the history of France, an example of this extraordinary contradiction to the result of all experience, it will be a striking lesson of the insufficiency and fallibility, of human wisdom or observation.

The time which has elapsed since the Revolution of July, 1789, has not been sufficient, to ascertain all its consequences, or to ripen and mature the many causes, which may still shake the freedom of France, before it attains to solidity. The yielding
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and passive conduct of the King, which has so powerfully operated to produce submission, in the two orders of the nobility and clergy, may be overborne by events, or may be affected by the advice and counsels of those who approach his person. The natural levity, and characteristic inconstancy of the nation, may conduce to make them weary of a possession, which however inestimable in its nature, is neither to be attained, nor preserved, without unremitting vigilance and exertion. The cessation or ruin of many branches of trade, necessarily resulting from the late convulsions: the severity of the taxes, which a free Government is compelled to exact, in common with the most despotic Monarch: the long habits of unconditional submission, so forcible in their operation upon the mind and character: All these principles may ferment, and ultimately burst into action.

To the internal sources of change and commotion, external ones may unite. Of the seven fugitives Princes of the Blood, who precipitately

cipitately abandoned their country, at the commencement of the national troubles, only one, the Prince of Conti, has yet ventured to revisit Paris, or submitted to take the Civic Oath, imposed by the new constitution. The malcontents, assembled at Turin, or at Venice, round the person of the Count d'Artois, aided by the capacity and resource of Calonne, and ready to be led on by Maillebois, menace the duration of the National Assembly. Even though these storms were dissipated, yet the Courts of Vienna and Madrid cannot be supposed to look with pleasure, or approbation, on the fallen condition of Louis the Sixteenth; and would, probably, aid with more than wishes, any effectual struggles which might be made, for the restoration of his antient prerogatives. These reflections and considerations may inspire some reasonable doubt, respecting the final issue of the subversion of the Royal Power, and the permanency of a free constitution in France.

Whatever may be the result, and though liberty should even ultimately triumph,

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its attainment has been accompanied with, at least, a temporary diminution, approaching to total suspension, of the political strength, importance, and consideration of the kingdom, as a European state. The energy and activity of the Crown have been withdrawn; and a spirit of licentiousness, the most fatal to every national and public effort, has prevailed throughout all the naval and military departments. The French colonies in the West Indies, are engaged in civil war, or become a prey to insurrection and anarchy. The frontiers, towards Germany, Savoy, and Spain, are either exposed to insult and invasion; or protected by troops, upon whose steady attachment and fidelity, after the late defection from their Prince, no secure reliance can be placed. That powerful monarchy, which for near a century and a half has inspired terror, and whose restless ambition has been so dangerous to every surrounding country: which has twice, during that time, nearly subjected Holland; which placed Philip the Fifth on the Spanish throne in 1700, and

and raised an Elector of Bavaria to the Imperial dignity, at a still more recent period: that power, occupied in endless metaphysical disquisitions upon the rights of men, or employed in desperate projects of revenue and finance, appears not only to be incapable of invading the repose of her neighbours, but even of providing for her own internal safety and tranquillity.

Such is the striking contrast, which the two monarchies of France and England actually present. The one, struggling through difficulties, to complete a system of liberty; and attempting to renovate her disordered finances, plunged into almost irremediable confusion. The other, enjoying all the advantages of established order; conducted by a Government, equally vigorous and popular; meeting every pecuniary embarrassment or imposition, with new and unexampled resources; strengthening her credit, and extending her commerce, while she covers the ocean with her navy, and spreads the glory of her name over every quarter of the earth.

I am arrived at that period, where the present work must necessarily terminate. I am conscious that it is only an outline; but the events of which I have treated, are not sufficiently removed, to admit of minute enquiry, or profound investigation. Yet, this imperfect production may perhaps serve to light the steps of some future Hume or Gibbon, to whom genius shall delegate the sublime task, of recording and perpetuating the English annals. My object has been only to commemorate the facts and characters, which have made the deepest impression on my memory and understanding, while a spectator of their full effect; and to stamp them with the genuine sentiment which they excited, of approbation or of censure. “ Statui res gestas
 “ Populi Romani,” says Sallust, “ carp-
 “ tim, ut quæque memoria digna vide-
 “ bantur, prescribere; eo magis, quod
 “ mihi a Spe, Metu, partibus Reipublicæ,
 “ animus liber erat.”

Whether I may be esteemed altogether exempt from the emotions, disclaimed by
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the Roman writer, I must leave to those who shall peruse this work, to determine. It is difficult to divest ourselves of the predilections, which almost necessarily arise in our minds, when engaged in the recital or description of scenes, acted in ages and countries the most remote. It would rather imply a degree of apathy, and defect of feeling, than any superiority to common and vulgar prejudice, if I could survey with the same tranquillity, the calamities, which only a few years since, threatened the destruction of England, and the present elevated state of security which we enjoy: or if in relating them, I should allow no portion of enthusiasm to mix with the veneration, always due to historic truth. Gratitude is naturally excited in every generous breast, by private benefits: but the Sovereign, or the Minister, who are the benefactors of nations, kindle, even in the historian who transmits to future times the events of their government, a venial partiality; nor can the
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reign of Trajan and Aurelius, be written with the same indifference, as we feel in describing the gluttony of Vitellius, or the crimes of Caracalla.

F I N I S.





